thaumaturgia

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THAUMATURGIA,

OR

ELUCIDATIONS OF THE MARVELLOUS.

BY

AN OXONIAN.

1835

"Bombastes kept the devil's bird, Shut in the pommel of his sword, And taught him all the cunning pranks, Of past and future mountebanks." -Hudibras-.

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THAUMATURGIA, OR ELUCIDATIONS OF THE MARVELLOUS. I. DEMONOLOGY–THE DEVIL, A MOST UNACCOUNTABLE PERSONAGE–WHO IS HE?–HIS PREDILECTION FOR OLD WOMEN–TRADITIONS CONCERNING EVIL SPIRITS, &C.

Children and old women have been accustomed to hear so many frightful things of the cloven-footed potentate, and have formed such diabolical ideas of his satanic majesty, exhibiting him in so many horrible and monstrous shapes, that really it were enough to frighten Beelzebub himself, were he by any accident to meet his prototype in the dark, dressed up in the several figures in which imagination has embodied him. And as regards men themselves,

it might be presumed that the devil could not by any means terrify them half so much, were they actually to meet and converse with him face to face: so true it is that his satanic majesty is not near so black as he is painted.

However useful the undertaking might prove, to give a true history of this ”tyrant of the air,” this ”God of the world,” this ”terror and overseer of mankind,” it is not our intention to become the devil’s biographer, notwithstanding the facility with which the materials might be collected. Of the devil’s origin, and the first rise of his family, we have sufficient authority on record; and, as regards his dealings, he has certainly always acted in the dark; though many of his doings both moral, political, ecclesiastical, and empirical, have left such strong impressions behind them, as to mark their importance in some transactions, even at the present

period of the christian world. These discussions, however, we shall leave in the hands of their respective champions, in order to take, as we proceed, a cursory view of some of the -diableries- with which mankind, in imitation of this great master, has been infected, from the first ages of the world.

The Greeks, and after them the Romans, conferred the appellation of Demon upon certain -genii-, or spirits, who made themselves visible to men with the intention of either serving them as friends, or doing them an injury as enemies. The followers of Plato distinguished between their gods–or -Dei Majorum Gentium- ; their demons, or those beings which were not dissimilar in their general character to the good and bad angels of Christian belief,–and their heroes. The Jews and the early christians restricted the name of Demon to beings of a ma-

lignant nature, or to devils properly so called; and it is to the early notions entertained by this people, that the outlines of later systems of demonology are to be traced.

It is a question, we believe, not yet set at rest by the learned in these sort of matters, whether the word -devil- be singular or plural, that is to say, whether it be the name of a personage so called, standing by himself, or a noun of multitude. If it be singular, and used only personal as a proper name, it consequently implies one imperial devil, monarch or king of the whole clan of hell, justly distinguished by the term DEVIL, or as our northern neighbours call him "the muckle horned deil," and poetically, after Burns "auld Clootie, Nick, or Hornie," or, according to others, in a broader set form of speech, "the devil in hell," that is, the "devil of a devil," or in scriptural phraseology, the "great

red dragon," the "Devil or Satan." But we shall not cavil on this mighty potentate's name; much less dispute his identity, notwithstanding the doubt that has been broached, whether the said devil be a real or an imaginary personage, in the shape, form, and with the faculties that have been so miraculously ascribed to him; for

If it should so fall out, as who can tell, But there may be a God, a heav'n and hell? Mankind had best consider well,–for fear It be too late when their mistakes appear.

The devil has always, it would seem, been particularly partial to old women; the most ugly and hideous of whom he has invariably selected to do his bidding. Mother Shipton, for instance, our famous old English witch, of whom so many funny stories are still told, is evidently very much wronged in her picture, if she was not of the most terrible aspect imaginable; and, if it be

true, Merlin, the famous Welch fortune-teller, was a most frightful figure. If we credit another story, he was begotten by ”-old nick-” himself. To return, however, to the devil’s agents being so infernally ugly, it need merely be remarked, that from time immemorial, he has invariably preferred such -rational- creatures as most belied the ”human form divine.”

The sybils, of whom so many strange prophetic things are recorded, are all, if the Italian poets are to be credited, represented as very old women; and as if ugliness were the -ne plus ultra- of beauty in old age, they have given them all the hideousness of the devil himself. It will be seen, despite of all that has been said to the disadvantage of the devil, that he has very much improved in his management of worldly affairs; so much so, that, instead of an administration of witches, wizzards, magicians, di-

viners, astrologers, quack doctors, pettifogging lawyers, and boroughmongers, he has selected some of the wisest men as well as greatest fools of the day to carry his plans into effect. His satanic majesty seems also to have considerably improved in his taste; owing, no doubt, to the present improving state of society, and the universal diffusion of useful knowledge. Indeed, we no longer hear of cloven-footed devils, only in a metaphorical sense–fire and brimstone are extinct or nearly so; the embers of hell and eternal damnation are chiefly kept alive and blown up by ultras among the sectaries who are invariably the promoters of religious fanaticism. Beauty, wit, address, with the less shackled in mind, have superseded all that was frightful, and terrible, odious, ugly, and deformed. This subject is poetically and more beautifully illustrated in the following demonological stanzas,

which are so appropriate to the occasion, that we cannot resist quoting them as a further prelude to our subjects:

When the devil for weighty despatches Wanted messengers cunning and bold, He pass'd by the beautiful faces And picked out the ugly and old.

Of these he made warlocks and witches To run of his errands by night, Till the over-wrought hag-ridden wretches Were as fit as the devil to fright.

But whoever has been his adviser, As his kingdom increases in growth, He now takes his measures much wiser, And trafics with beauty and youth.

Disguis'd in the wanton and witty, He haunts both the church and the court; And sometimes he visits the city, Where all the best christians resort.

Thus dress'd up in full masquerade, He the

bolder can range up and down For he better can drive on his trade, In any one's name than his own.

To be brief, the devil, it appears, is by far too cunning still for mankind, and continues to manage things in his own way, in spite of bishops, priests, laymen, and new churches. He governs the vices and propensities of men by methods peculiarly his own; though every crime or extortion, subterfuge or design, whether it be upon the purse or the person, will not make a man a devil; it must nevertheless be confessed, that every crime, be its magnitude or complexion what it may, puts the criminal, in some measure, into the devil's power, and gives him an ascendancy and even a title to the delinquent, whom he ever afterwards treats in a very magisterial manner.

We are told that every man has his attendant

evil genius, or tutelary spirit, to execute the orders of the master demon–that the attending evil angel sees every move we make upon the board; witnesses all our actions, and permits us to do mischief, and every thing that is pernicious to ourselves;–that, on the contrary, our good spirit, actuated by more benevolent motives, is always accessary to our good actions, and reluctant to those that are bad. If this be the case, it may be fairly asked, how does it happen that those two contending spirits do not quarrel and give each other black eyes and broken heads during their rivalship for pre-eminence? And why does the evil tempting spirit so often prevail?

Instead of literally answering these difficult questions, it may be resolved into a good argument, as an excellent allegory to represent the struggle in the mind of man between good and

evil inclinations. But to take them as they actually are, and merely to talk by way of natural consequence–for to argue from nature is certainly the best way to get to the bottom of the devil's story,–if there are good and evil spirits attending us, that is to say, a good angel and a devil, then it is no unjust reproach to say, when people follow the dictates of the latter, that -the devil's in them-, or that -they are devils-! or, to carry the simile a point farther, that as the generality, and by far the greatest number of people follow and obey the evil spirit and not the good one, and that the power predominating is allowed to be the nominating power, it must then of course be allowed that the greater part of mankind have the devil in them, which brings us to the conclusion of our argument; and in support of which the following stanzas come happily to our recollection.

To persons and places he sends his disguises, And dresses up all his banditti, Who, as pick-pockets flock to country assizes, Crowd up to the court and the city.

They're at every elbow, and every ear, And ready at every call, Sir; The vigilant scout, plants his agents about, And has something to do with us all, Sir.

In some he has part, and some he has whole, And of some, (like the Vicar of -Baddow-) It can neither be said they have body or soul; And only are devils in shadow.

The pretty and witty are devils in masque; The beauties are mere apparitions; The homely alone by their faces are known, And the good by their ugly conditions.

The beaux walk about like the shadows of men, And wherever he leads them they follow; But tak'em, and shak'em, there's not one in ten

But's as light as a feather, and hollow.

Thus all his affairs he drives on in disguise, And he tickles mankind with a feather, Creeps in at one's ear, and looks out at our eyes, And jumbles our senses together.

He raises the vapours and prompts the desires, And to ev'ry dark deed holds the candle; The passions inflames and the appetite fires, And takes every thing by the handle.

Thus he walks up and down in complete masquerade And with every company mixes; Sells in every shop, works at every trade, And ev'ry thing doubtful perplexes.

The Jewish traditions concerning evil spirits are various, some of which are founded on Scripture, some borrowed from the opinions of the Pagans, some are fables of their own invention, and some are allegorical.

The demons of the Jews were considered ei-

ther as the distant progeny of Adam or Eve, resulting from an improper intercourse with supernatural beings, or of Cain. As the doctrine, however, was extremely revolting to some few of the early Christians, they maintained that demons were the souls of departed human beings, who were still permitted to interfere in the affairs of the Earth, either to assist their friends or to persecute their enemies. But this doctrine did not obtain.

About two centuries and a half ago an attempt, in a condensed form, was made, to give the various opinions entertained of demons at an early date of the christian era; and it was not until a much later period of Christianity, that a more decided doctrine relative to their origin and nature was established. These tenets involved certain very knotty points respecting the fall of those angels, who, for disobedience, had

forfeited their high abode in Heaven. The gnostics of early christian times, in imitation of a classification of the different orders of spirits by Plato, had attempted a similar arrangement with respect to an hierarchy of angels, the gradation of which stood as follows.

The first, and highest order, was named SERAPHINS; the second, CHERUBINS; the third was the order of THRONES; the fourth, of DOMINIONS; the fifth, of VIRTUES; the sixth, of POWERS; the seventh, of PRINCIPALITIES; the eighth, of ARCHANGELS; the ninth, and lowest, of ANGELS. This fable was, in a pointed manner, censured by the Apostles: yet strange to say, it almost outlived the pneumatologists of the middle ages. These schoolmen, in reference to the account that Lucifer rebelled against heaven, and that Michael the archangel warred against him, long agitated the momentous question, what

order of angels fell on the occasion. At length it became the prevailing opinion that Lucifer was of the order of Seraphins. It was also proved after infinite research, that Agares, Belial, and Barbatos, each of them deposed angels of great rank, had been of the order of Virtues; that Beleth, Focalor, and Phoenix, had been of the order of Thrones; that Gaap had been of the order of Powers, and Virtues; and Murmur of Thrones and Angels. The pretensions of many noble devils were, likewise, canvassed, and, in an equally satisfactory manner, determined; a multiplicity of incidents connected therewith were arranged, which previously had been matter of considerable doubt and debate. These sovereign devils, to each of whom was assigned a certain district, had many noble spirits subordinate to them whose various ranks and precedence were settled with all the preciseness of

heraldic distinction:–there were, for instance, devil-dukes; devil-marquises; devil-earls; devil-knights; devil-presidents, devil-archbishops, and bishops; prelates; and, without question, devil-physicians, and apothecaries.

In the middle ages, when conjuration had attained a certain pitch of perfection, and was regularly practised in Europe, devils of distinction were supposed to make their appearance under decided forms, by which they were as well recognised, as the head of any ancient family would be by his crest and armorial bearings. The shapes they were accustomed to adopt were registered among their names and characters.

Although the leading tenets of Demonology may be traced to the Jews and early Christians, yet they were matured by our early communications with the Moors of Spain, who were the chief philosophers of the dark ages, and

between whom and the natives of France and Italy, a great communication existed. Toledo, Seville and Salamanca, became the greatest schools of magic. At the latter city predilections on the black art from a consistent regard to the solemnity of the subject were delivered within the walls of a vast and gloomy cavern. The schoolmen taught that all knowledge might be obtained from the assistance of the fallen angels. They were skilled in the abstract sciences, in the knowledge of precious stones, in alchymy, in the various languages of mankind and of the lower animals; in the Belles-Lettres, Moral Philosophy, Pneumatology, Divinity, Magic, History, and Prophecy. They could controul the winds and waters, and the stellar influences. They could cause earthquakes, induce diseases or cure them, accomplish all vast mechanical undertakings, and release souls out of Purga-

tory. They could influence the passions of the mind, procure the reconciliation of friends or of foes, engender mutual discord, induce mania, melancholy, or direct the force and objects of human affection. Such was the Demonology taught by its orthodox professors. Yet other systems of it were devised, which had their origin in the causes attending the propagation of christianity; for it must have been a work of much time to eradicate the almost universal belief in the pagan deities, which had become so numerous as to fill every creek and corner of the universe with fabulous beings. Many learned men, indeed, were induced to side with the popular opinion on the subject, and did nothing more than endeavour to unite it with their acknowledged systems of Demonology. They taught that the objects of heathen reverence were fallen angels in league with the Prince of

Darkness, who, until the appearance of our Saviour, had been allowed to range on the earth uncontrolled, and to involve the world in spiritual darkness and delusion.

According to the various ranks which these spirits held in the vast kingdom of Lucifer, they were suffered, in their degraded state, to take up their abode in the air, in mountains, in springs, or in seas. But although the various attributes ascribed to the Greek and Roman deities, were, by the early teachers of christianity, considered in the humble light of demoniacal delusions, yet, for many centuries they possessed great influence over the minds of the vulgar. The notion of every man being attended by an evil genius was abandoned much earlier than the far more agreeable part of the same doctrine which taught that, as an antidote to their influence, each individual was also accompanied

by a benignant spirit. ”The ministration of angels,” says a writer in the Athenian Oracle, ”is certain; but the manner -how-, is the knot to be untied.” It was an opinion of the early philosophers that not only kingdoms[1] had their tutelary guardians, but that every person had his particular genius or good spirit, to protect and admonish him through the medium of dreams and visions. Such were the objects of superstitious reverence derived from the Pantheons of Greece and Rome, the whole synod of which was supposed to consist of demons, who were still actively bestirring themselves to delude mankind. But in the west of Europe, a host of other demons, far more formidable, were brought into play, who had their origin in Celtic, Teutonic, and even in Eastern fables; and as their existence, as well as influence, was boldly asserted, not only by the early christians, but even by the re-

formers, it was long before the rites to which they were accustomed were totally eradicated.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Thus the Penates, or household gods presided over new-born infants. Every thing had its guardian or peculiar genius: cities, groves, fountains, hills, were all provided with keepers of this kind, and to each man was allotted no less than two–one good, the other bad (Hor. Lib. II. Epist. 2.) who attended him from the cradle to the grave. The Greeks called them -demons-. They were named -Praenestites-, from their superintending human affairs.

II. MAGIC AND MAGICAL RITES, &C.

Few subjects present to a philosophic eye more matter of curious, important and instructive research than the natural history of religion. Some sort of religious service has been found to prevail in all ages and nations, from the most rude and barbarous periods of human society, to those of cultivation and refinement. In these periods are to be traced specimens strongly marked with exertions of the feelings, and faculties of men in every situation almost that can be sup-

posed. It is from the contemplation of these exertions that we learn what sort of creature man is; that we discover the extent of his powers, and the tendency of his desires: and that we become acquainted with the force of culture and civilization upon him, by comparing the degrees of improvement he has attained in the various stages of society through which he has passed.

It seems to be a principle established by experience, that mankind in general have at no time been able, by the operation of their own mutual powers, to ascend in their inquiries to the great comprehensive foundation of true religion,– the knowledge of a first cause. This idea is too grand, too distinct, or too refined for the generality of the human race. They are surrounded by sensible objects, and strongly attached to them; they are in a great measure unaccustomed to the most simple and obvious

degrees of abstraction, and they can scarcely conceive anything to have a real existence that may not become an object of their senses. Possessed of such sentiments and views, they are fully prepared in embracing all the follies and absurdities of superstition. They worship every thing they either love or fear, in order to procure the continuance of favours enjoyed, or to avert that resentment they may have reason to dread. As their knowledge of nature is altogether imperfect, and as many events every moment present themselves, upon which they can form no theoretical conclusion, they fly for satisfaction to the most simple, but most ineffectual of all solutions–the agency of invisible beings, with which, in their opinion, all nature is filled. Hence the rise of Polytheism and local deities, which have overspread the face of the earth, under the different titles of guardian

gods or tutelary saints. Hence magnificent temples and splendid statues have been erected to aid the imagination of votaries, and to realize objects of worship, which, though supposed to be always hovering around, seldom condescend to become visible.

After obtaining some information concerning present objects, the next cause of solicitude and inquiry to the mind of man, is to penetrate a little into the secrets of futurity. The same tutelary gods who bestowed their care, and exerted their powers to procure present pleasure and happiness for mankind, were supposed not averse to grant them, in this respect also, a little indulgence. Hence the famous oracular responses of antiquity; hence the long train of conjurers, fortune-tellers, astrologers, necromancers, magicians, wizards, and witches, that have been found in all places and at all times; nor have

superior knowledge and civilization been sufficient to extirpate such characters, by demonstrating the futility and absurdity of their views.

Among the ancients, this superstition was a great engine of state. The respect paid to omens, auguries and oracles, was profound and universal; and the persons in power monopolized the privilege of consulting and interpreting them. They joined the people in expressing their veneration; but there is little reason to doubt that they conducted the responses in such a manner as best suited the purposes of government. On this account, it would not be difficult for the oracle to emit predictions, which, to all those unacquainted with the secret, would appear altogether astonishing and unaccountable. It would seem that this principle alone is sufficient to explain all the phenomena of ancient oracles.

Though devination has long ceased to be an instrument of government, abundance of designing persons have not been wanting in latter ages, who found much interest in taking advantage of the weakness or credulity of their fellow creatures. Against this pestilent and abandoned race of men, most civilized countries have enacted penal laws. But what rendered such persons peculiarly detestable in modern times, was the communication which they were supposed to hold with the devil, to whom they sold themselves, and from whom, in return, they derived their information. And by this principle the penal statutes, instead of extirpating, inflamed the evil. They alarmed the imaginations of the people; they tempted them to impute the cause of their misfortunes and disappointment to the malice or resentment of their neighbours; they induced them to trust to their

suspicions, much more than to their reason; and they multiplied witches and wizards, by putting into possession of every foolish informer the means of punishment. In several countries of Europe, these statutes still subsist; they were not abolished in Britain till a period still at no great distance. Since the abolition of persecution, the faith of witchcraft has disappeared even among the vulgar. It was long found inconsistent with any considerable progress in philosophy.

For these reasons we read, with some degree of astonishment, a treatise on this exploded subject, by a philosopher, an eminent physician, a privy counseller of the then Empress Queen, and a professor in the university of Vienna. It was long doubted whether the professor was in earnest, but the world was at length forced to admit, that the great Antonius de Haen cer-

tainly believed in witchcraft, and reckoned the knowledge of it, in treating a disease, of great importance to a physician–to the acquisition of which useful knowledge, he dedicated a great part of his time. In the year 1758, three old women, condemned to death for witchcraft, were brought by order of the Empress from Croatia to Vienna, to undergo an examination, with regard to the equity of the sentence pronounced against them. The question was not whether the crime existed; the only object of inquiry respected the justice of its application. The author, and the illustrious van Swieten, were appointed to make the investigation. After reading over the depositions, produced on the trials with the greatest care, and interrogating the culprits themselves -most vigorously- by means of a Croatian interpreter, these great physicians discovered that the -three old- women were not

witches, and prevailed with the Empress to send them home in safety. It was this circumstance that induced de Haen to write on magic.

That some judgment may be formed of de Haen's very extraordinary and curious production written in the latter part of the eighteenth century, we shall here furnish our readers with an abstract of its principles and reasoning, to which we shall subjoin some remarks.

By the crime of magic, the author informs us, he means any improper communication between men and evil spirits, whether it be called theurgy, soothsaying, necromancy, chiromancy, incantation or witchcraft. He proposes to prove, in the first place, that such a communication does actually exist. He quotes the Egyptian magicians, the witch of Endor, the possessions mentioned in the New Testament, and many more exceptionable authorities from the fathers,

and canons of the church. He is positive the incantations of the Egyptian magicians were real operations of infernal agents, and that the accounts of them, delivered by Moses, can admit no other construction.

May not the sincere believer in the divine authority of the scriptures reasonably hesitate concerning this conclusion? Or rather, does not such an interpretation justly expose revelation to reproach? The plain dictates of the best philosophy are, that nothing is more simple, regular, and uniform than the ordinary course of nature; and that this course can neither be suspended nor altered, but by its author, nor can by him be permitted to be interrupted by any inferior being, unless for the most important reasons. It does not appear what good end could be gained, on the part of Providence, by the permission of these magical enchant-

ments, supposing them supernatural; and if we imagine the Devil to have acted spontaneously, with a view to support his power and influence, he most manifestly erred in his design. Nothing could be more impolitic than his appearance in a field of combat, where he well knew he must sustain an ignominious defeat. Or if he worked effectually to support the power and influence of his servants the magicians, he should have counteracted, not repeated, the miraculous exhibitions of Moses. That the magicians possessed no power sufficient for this purpose is obvious, from their not exerting it. That Pharoah expected no such exertion from them is evident from his never requesting it, and from his application to Moses and Aaron. The truth seems to be, that Pharoah conceived Moses and Aaron to be magicians like his own. He wished to support the character of the lat-

ter; and he concluded this would be effectually done, if they could only furnish a pretence for affirming that they had performed every wonder accomplished by the former. Without some such supposition of collusion, two of the miracles attempted by the magicians are perfectly absurd and contradictory. They pretended to turn water into blood, when there was not one drop of water in all the land of Egypt, which Aaron had not previously converted into that substance. They pretended to send frogs over the land of Egypt, when every corner of it was swarming with that loathsome reptile. It is further remarkable that, with the three first only of Moses's miracles they proposed to vie; on the appearance of the fourth, they fairly resigned the contest, and acknowledged very honestly that the hand of God was visible in the miracles of Moses;–a plain confession that no supernat-

ural power operated in their own.

De Haen considers the case of the witch of Endor as an authority still more direct. He maintains that Samuel was actually called up, either under corporeal or fantastic form, and foretold Saul the fate of his engagements with the Philistines. Let us attend to the circumstances of the story, and examine whether it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to this supernatural hypothesis. The mind of Saul was distracted and agitated beyond measure by the most critical and alarming situation of his affairs; his distress was so great that, forgetting his dignity and safety, he dismissed his attendants, laid aside his royal robes, was unable to eat bread, and, dressed like the meanest of his people, he took his journey to the abode of the conjurer. In this state of mind, prepared for imposition, he arrives during the night at her

residence. He prevails with her, by much solicitation, and probably by ample rewards, to call up Samuel. To discompose still further the disordered mind of Saul, she announces the pretended approach of the apparition by a loud acclamation, tells the king she knew him, which till now she affected not to do, and describes the resurrection of the prophet, under the awful semblance of God's rising out of the earth.

During all this time the king had seen nothing extraordinary, either because he was not allowed light sufficient for that purpose, or was not admitted within the sphere of vision. He entreats an account of the personage who approached, and the conjurer describes the well-known appearance of Samuel. The prophet sternly challenges the king for disturbing his repose, tells him that David was intended to be King of Israel, that himself would be defeated by the

Philistines, and that he and his sons would fall in battle. The king enters into no conversation with the apparition; but unable any longer to support his agitation, drops lifeless on the ground. The conjurer returns to Saul, presses him to take some food which she had prepared. He at last complies; and having finished his repast, departs with his servants before the morning. The whole of this scene, it is evident, passed in darkness. It does not appear that Saul ever saw the prophet; and it surely required no supernatural intelligence to communicate all the information he obtained. This would readily be suggested by the despondency of the king, the strength of his enemies, and the disposition of the whole people of the Jews alienated from him, and inclined towards his successor. The witch of Endor, therefore, might be a common fortune-teller, and her case exhibits no direct

proof of supernatural possession.

We do not pretend to account so easily for many of the possessions recorded in the New Testament, though few of these only are applicable to the case of sorcery. We are well aware, that several writers of eminence, who cannot be supposed to entertain the least unfavourable sentiments of revelation, have undertaken to explain these possessions, without having recourse to any thing supernatural, by representing them as figurative descriptions of particular and local diseases.

We mean not to adopt, or defend the views of such authors, though we may perhaps be allowed to observe that, were their opinions supported in a satisfactory manner, christianity would lose nothing by the attempt. It would be exempted, by this means, from a little cavilling and ridicule, to which some of its enemies reckon

it at present exposed, and the design could not in the least derogate from its divinity, as the instantaneous cure of a distemper cannot be considered less miraculous than the expulsion of the devil. At any rate, these possessions are all extraordinary; appeared on some most extraordinary occasion; and from them, therefore, no general conclusion can be drawn to the ordinary cases of common life.

We shall now translate a specimen of de Haen's[2] authorities, extracted from the fathers. The following from Jerome will need no comment. This father, in his life of St. Hilario the hermit, relates that a young man of the town of Gaza in Syria, fell deeply in love with a pious virgin in the neighbourhood. He attacked her with looks, whispers, professions, caresses, and all those arguments which usually conquer yielding virginity; but finding them all ineffectual,

he resolved to repair to Memphis, the residence of many eminent conjurers, and implore their magic aid. He remained there for a year, till he was fully instructed in the art. He then returned home, exulting in his acquisitions, and feasting his imagination with the luscious scenes he was now confident of realizing. All he had to do was to lodge secretly some hard words and uncouth figures, engraved on a plate of brass, below the threshold of the door of the house in which the lady lived. She became perfectly furious, she tore her hair, gnashed her teeth, and repeated incessantly the name of the youth, who had been drawn from her presence by the violence of her despairing passion. In this situation she was conducted by her relations to the cell of old Hilario. The devil that possessed her, in consequence of the charm, began immediately to howl, and to confess the

truth. "I have suffered violence," said he; "I have been forced hither against my inclination. How happy was I at Memphis, amusing my friends with visions! O the pains, the tortures which I suffer! You command me to dislodge, and I am detained fast by the charm below the threshold. I cannot depart, unless the young man dismiss me." So cautious, however, was the saint, that he would not permit the magic figures to be searched for, till he had released the virgin, for fear he should seem to have intercourse with incantations in performing the cure or to believe that a devil could even speak truth. He observed only that demons are always liars, and cunning to deceive.

De Haen imputes to the power of magic the miracles,[3] as they are called, of the famous Apollonius Thyanaeus. He seems to entertain no scruple about their authority. As several of

the enemies of revelation have held forth Thyanaeus as a rival of Jesus Christ, a specimen of his performances may amuse our readers. During an assembly of the people at Ephesus, a great flight of birds approached from a neighbouring wood; one bird led all the rest. "There is nothing wonderful," says Thyanaeus, to the astonished people, "in this appearance. A boy passing along a particular street has carelessly scattered in it some corn which he carried; one bird has tasted the food, and generously calls the rest to partake the repast." The hearers repaired to the spot, and found the information true.

Being called to allay a pestilence which raged at Ephesus, he ordered an old beggar to be burned under the stones near the temple of Hercules, as an enemy to the gods. He commanded the people again to remove the stones,

that they might see what sort of animal had been put to death. They found not a man, but a dog. The plague, however, ceased.

A married woman of rank being dead, was carried out to be burned in an open litter, followed by her husband dissolved in tears. Apollonius approaching, requests him to stop the procession, and he would put an end to his grief. He asked the name of the woman, touched her, and muttered over her some words. She immediately revived, began to speak, and returned again to her own house. Fleury, who relates the miracle, remarks that some people doubted whether the woman had been really dead, as they had observed something like breath issue from her mouth. Others imagined she had been seized only with a tedious faint, and that the operation of the cold dews and damps upon her body might naturally recover her. On

Fleury's remark de Haen most sagely observes, that the persons who observed the woman breathing could not surely have suppressed the joyful news, and would certainly have stopped the procession before the philosopher arrived.

De Haen's second attempt is to recite all the objections that have been made against sorcery, and to subjoin to each a distinct refutation. There is nothing in this part of the work that merits any attention. He concludes in these words: "I may then with confidence affirm, that the art of magic most certainly exists. History, sacred and prophane; authority human and divine; experiments the most unquestionable and unexceptionable, all concur to demonstrate its reality."

The last part of de Haen's work relates to the discovering and treating of magical diseases, to explain which seems to have been the chief

purpose of the author in composing his book. Much caution, he observes, and attention are necessary on this head; and the physician should not readily admit the imputation of witchcraft. No absence of the ordinary symptoms, no uncommon alteration of the course of the distemper, are sufficient to infer this conclusion, because these may arise from unknown natural causes. What then are the marks of certain incantations? De Haen holds the following to be indisputable: "if, in any uncommon disease, there shall be found, in the stuffing of the cushions, or cielings of the room in which the patient lies, in the feather or the chaff of his bed, about the door, or under the threshold of his house, any strange characters, images, bones, hair, seeds, or roots of plants; and if upon the removal of these, or upon conveying the patient into another apartment, he shall suddenly re-

cover; or if the patient himself, or his friends, shall be so wicked as to call a wizzard to their aid, by whom the malady shall be removed; or if insects and animals which do not lodge in the human body; if stones, metals, glass, knives, plaited hair, pieces of pitch, be ejected from particular parts of the body, of greater size, and weight and figure, than could be supposed to make their way through these parts, without much greater demolition and delaceration of the passages; in all these cases, the disease is unquestionably magical."

The author proceeds to enquire whether the physician may presume to remove the instruments of incantation in order to relieve the patient without incurring the accusation of impiety by interfering with the implements and furniture of the devil; and concludes very formally that, after approaching them with all due cere-

mony and respect, after imploring with suitable devotion and ardour, the protection and direction of heaven in such a perilous undertaking, he may attempt to intermeddle, and may occasionally expect a successful issue.

Such are the views, reasonings, and conclusions of, at the time, one of the first physicians and philosophers of Germany;–views and reasonings which would have been received with eagerness and applause two hundred years ago, but which the philosophy and improvements of later times seem to have banished to the abodes of ignorance and barbarity.

The origin of almost all our knowledge may be traced to the earlier periods of antiquity. This is peculiarly the case with respect to the arts denominated magical. There were few ancient nations, however barbarous, which could not furnish many individuals to whose spells and

enchantments the power of nature and the material world were supposed to be subjected. The Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and indeed all the oriental nations were accustomed to refer all natural effects, for which they could not account to the agency of demons, who were believed to preside over herbs, trees, rivers, mountains, and animals. Every member of the human body was under their power, and all corporeal diseases were produced by their malignity. For instance, if any happened to be affected with a fever, little anxiety was manifested to discover its cause, or to adopt rational measures for its cure; it must no doubt have been occasioned by some evil spirit residing in the body, or influencing, in some mysterious way, the fortunes of the sufferer. That influence could be counteracted only by certain magical rites; hence the observance of those rites soon obtained a

permanent establishment in the East. Even at the present day, many uncivilized people hold that all nature is filled with genii, of which some exercise a beneficent, and others a destructive power. All evils with which man is afflicted, are considered the work of these imaginary beings, whose favour must he propitiated by sacrifices, incantations, and songs. If the Greenlander be unsuccessful in fishing, the Huron in hunting, or in war; if even the scarcely half reasoning Hottentot finds every thing is not right in his mind, body, or fortune, no time must be lost before the spirit be invoked. After the removal of some present evil, the next strongest desire in the human mind is the attainment of some future good. This good is often beyond the power, and still oftener beyond the inclination of man to bestow; it must therefore be sought from beings which are supposed to possess consider-

able influence over human affairs, and which being elevated above the baser passions of our nature, were thought to regard with peculiar favour all who acknowledged their power, or invoked their aid: hence the numerous rites which have, in all ages and countries, been observed in consulting superior intelligences, and the equally numerous modes in which their pleasure has been communicated to mortals.

The Chaldean magi were chiefly founded on astrology, and were much conversant with certain animals, metals and plants, which they employed in all their incantations; the virtue of which was derived from stellar influence. Great attention was always paid to the positions and the configurations presented by the celestial sphere; and it was only at favourable seasons that the solemn rites were celebrated. Those rites were accompanied with many peculiar and fantastic

gestures, by leaping, clapping of hands, prostrations, loud cries, and not unfrequently with unintelligible exclamations. Sacrifices, and burnt offerings were used to propitiate superior powers; but our knowledge of the magical rites exercised by certain oriental nations, the Jews only excepted, is extremely limited. All the books professedly written on the subject, have been, swept away by the torrent of time. We learn, however, that the professors among the Chaldeans were generally divided into three classes; the -Ascaphim-, or charmers, whose office it was to remove present, and to avert future contingent evils; to construct talismans, etc. The -Mecaschephim-, or magicians, properly so called, who were conversant with the occult powers of nature, and the supernatural world; and the -chasdim-, or astrologers, who constituted by far the most numerous and respectable class.

And from the assembly of the wise men on the occasion of the extraordinary dream of Nebuchadnezzar, it would appear that Babylon had also her oneirocritici, or interpreters of dreams–a species of diviners indeed, to which almost every nation of antiquity gave birth.

Like the Chaldean astrologers, the Persian magi, from whom our word magic is derived, belong to the priesthood. But the worship of the gods was not their chief occupation; they were also great proficients in the arts. They joined to the worship of the gods, and to the profession of medicine and natural magic, a pretended familiarity with superior powers, from which they boasted of deriving all their knowledge. Like Plato, who probably imbibed many of their notions, they taught that demons hold a middle rank between gods and men; that they (the demons) presided not only over divinations, auguries,

conjurations, oracles, and every species of magic, but also over sacrifices, and prayer, which in behalf of men is thus presented, and rendered acceptable to the gods. Indeed, the austerity of their lives[4] was well calculated to strengthen the impression which their cunning had already made on the multitude, and to prepare the way for whatever impostures they might afterwards practise.

We are less acquainted with Indian magic than with that practised by any other Eastern nations. It may, however, be reasonably enough inferred that it was very similar to that for which the magi in general were held in such high estimation: although they were excluded, as beings of too sacred a nature, from the ordinary occurrences of life. Their Brahmins, or Gymnosophists, were regarded with as much reverence as the magi, and probably were more

worthy of it. Some of them dwelt in woods, and others in the immediate vicinity of cities. Their skill in medicine was great; the care which they took in educating youth, in familiarizing it with generous and virtuous sentiments, did them peculiar honour; and their maxims and discourses, as recorded by historians, prove that they were much accustomed to profound reflection on the principles of civil polity, morality, religion and philosophy.

JEWISH MAGI.

Of the magi of the Jews, it is proved by Lightfoot,[5] that after their return from Babylon, having entirely forsaken idolatry, and being no longer favoured with the gift of prophecy, they gradually abandoned themselves, before the coming of our Saviour, to sorcery and divination. The Talmud, still regarded with a reverence bordering on idolatry, abounds with instructions for the due observance of superstitious rites. After their city and temple were destroyed, many Jewish impostors were highly esteemed for their pretended skill in magic; and under pretence of

interpreting dreams, they met with daily opportunities of practising the most shameful frauds. Many Rabbins were quite as well versed in the school of Zoroaster, as in that of Moses. They prescribed all kinds of conjuration, some for the cure of wounds, some against the dreaded bite of serpents, and others against thefts and enchantments. Their divinations were founded on the influence of the stars, and on the operations of spirits, they did not, indeed, like the Chaldean magi, regard the heavenly bodies as gods and genii, but they ascribed to them a great power over the actions and opinions of men.

The magical rites of the Jews were, and indeed are still, chiefly performed on various important occasions, as on the birth of a child, marriages, etc. On such occasions the evil spirits are supposed to be more than usually ac-

tive in their malignity, which can only be counteracted by certain enchantments.[6] They believe that Lilis will cause all their male children to die on the eighth day after their birth; girls on the twenty-first.[7] The following are the means adopted by the German Jews to avert this calamity. They draw arrows in circular lines with chalk or charcoal on the four walls of the room in which the accouchement takes place, and write upon each arrow: -Adam, Eve! make Lilis go away!- They write also on certain parts of the room the name of the three angels who preside over medicine, -Senai, Sansenai and Sanmangelof-, after the manner taught them by Lilis herself when she entertained the hope of causing all the Jews to be drowned in the Red Sea.

Josephus, the historian of the Jews, does not allow to magic so ancient an origin among

them, as many Jewish writers do. He makes Solomon the first who practised an art which is so powerful against demons; and the knowledge of which, he asserts, was communicated to that prince by immediate inspiration. The latter, continues this historian, invented and transmitted to posterity in his writings, certain incantations for the cure of diseases, and for the expulsion and perpetual banishment of wicked spirits from the bodies of the possessed. It consisted, according to his description, in the use of a certain root, which was sealed up, and held under the nose of the person possessed; the name of Solomon, with the words prescribed by him, was then pronounced, and the demon forced immediately to retire. He does not even hesitate to assert, that he himself has been an eye witness of such an effect produced on a person named Eleazer, in the presence of the

Emperor Vespasian and his sons. Nor will this relation surprise us, when we consider the rooted malignity entertained by the Jews to the christian religion, and this writer's attempt to appreciate the miracles of our Saviour, by ascribing them to magical influence, and by representing them as easy of accomplishment to all acquainted with the occult sciences.

Innumerable are the devices contained in the Cabala for averting possible evils, as the plague, disease, and sudden death. It directs how to select and combine some passages of scripture, which are believed both to render supernatural beings visible, and to produce many wonderful and surprising effects. The most famous wonders have been accomplished by means of the name of God. The sacred word Jehovah is, when read with points, multiplied by the Jewish doctors into twelve, forty-two, and seventy-

two letters, of which words are composed that are thought to possess miraculous energy. By these, say they, Moses slew the Egyptians; by these Israel was preserved from the destroying angel of the wilderness; by these Elijah separated the waters of the river, to open a passage for himself and Elisha, and by these it has been as daringly and impudently asserted, that our blessed Saviour, the eternal Son of God, cast out evil spirits. The name of the devil is likewise used in their magical devices. The five Hebrew letters of which that name[8] is composed, exactly constitute the number 364, one less than the days of the whole year. They pretended that, owing to the wonderful virtue of the number comprised in the name of Satan, he is prevented from accusing them for an equal number of days: hence the stratagem before alluded to, for depriving the devil of the power of

doing them any harm on the only day on which that power is granted to him.

In allusion to the cabalists, Pliny says, "There is another sect of magicians of which Moses and Latopea, Jews, were the first authors." It was the prevailing opinion among the Hebrews, that the Cabala was delivered by God to Moses, and thence through a succession of ages, even to the times of Ezra, preserved by tradition only, without the help of writing, in the same manner as the doctrine of Pythagoras was delivered by Archippus and Lysiades, who kept schools at Thebes in Greece, where the scholars learned all their master's precepts by heart, and employed their memories instead of books. So certain Jews, despising letters, placed all their learning in memory, observation, and verbal tradition; whence it was called by them Cabala, that is, a receiving from one to another

by the ear an art said to be very ancient and only known to the christians in later times.

The Jews divided the Cabala into three parts; the first containing the knowledge of -Bresith-, which they call also cosmology, the object of which is to teach and explain the force and efficacy of things created, natural or celestial; expounding also the laws and mysteries of the Bible according to philosophical reasons, which on that account differs little from natural magic, a science in which King Solomon is said to have excelled. We find, therefore, in the sacred histories of the Jews, that he was wont to discourse from the cedar of the forests of Lebanon to the low hyssop of the valley; as also of cattle, birds, reptiles, and fish, all which contain within themselves a kind of magical virtue. Moses also, in his expositions upon the Pentateuch, and most of the Talmudists, have followed the

rules of the same art.

The other division of the Cabala contains the knowledge of things more sublime, as of divine and angelical powers, the contemplation of sacred names and characters; being a certain kind of symbolical theology, in which the letters, figures, numbers, names, points, lines, accents, etc. are esteemed to contain the significations of most profound things and wonderful mysteries. This part again is twofold—Authmantick-, handling the nature of angels, the powers, names, characters of spirits and souls departed–and -Theomantick-, which searches into the mysteries of the Divine Majesty, his emanations, his names, and -Pentacula-, which he who attains to is supposed to be endowed with most wonderful power. It was, they say, by virtue of this art, that Moses wrought so many miracles; that Joshua commanded the

sun to stand still; that Elias called down fire from heaven; that Daniel the prophet muzzled the lions' mouths; and that the three children sang in the fiery furnace. And, what is more, the perfidious and unbelieving Jews, did not stick to aver, that our Saviour himself wrought all his miracles by virtue of this art, and that he discovered several of its secrets, containing a variety of charms against devils, and also, as Josephus writes, against diseases. "As for my part," says Cornelius Agrippa, in allusion to this subject, "I do not doubt but that God revealed many things to Moses and the prophets, which were contained under the covert of the words of the law, which were not to be communicated to the profane vulgar: so for this art, which the Jews so much boast of, which I have with great labour and diligence searched into, I must acknowledge it to be a mere rhap-

sody of superstition, and nothing but a kind of theurgic magic before spoken of. For if, as the Jews contend, coming from God, it did any way conduce to perfection of life, salvation of men, truth of understanding, certainly that spirit of truth, which having forsaken the synagogue, is now come to teach us all truth, had never concealed it all this while from the church, which certainly knows all those things that are of God; whose grace, baptism, and other sacraments of salvation, are perfectly revealed in all languages;–for every language is alike, so that there be the same piety; neither is there any other name in heaven or on earth, by which we can be saved, but only the name of Jesus. Therefore the Jews, most skilful in divine names, after the coming of Christ, were able to do nothing, in comparison of their forefathers:–the Cabala of the Jews, therefore, is nothing else, but a most per-

nicious superstition, the which by collecting, dividing, and changing several names, words, and letters, dispersed up and down in the bible, at their own good will and pleasure, and making one thing out of another, they dissolve the members of truth, raising up sentences, inductions, and parables of their own, apply thereto the oracles of divine scripture to them, defaming the scriptures, and affirming their fragments to consist of them, blaspheme the word of God by their wrested suppositions of words, syllables, letters and numbers; endeavouring to prop up their villainous inventions, by arguments drawn from their own delusions."

FOOTNOTES:

[2] Antonio de Haen, S.C.R.A. Majestate a consiliis anticis, et Archiatri, medicinae in alma et antiquissimo universitate professoris primarij, plurium eruditorium societatem socii, de magia liber. 8vo. Vienna.

[3] Many significations have been attached to the word miracle, both by the ancients and moderns. With us a miracle is the suspension or violation of the laws of nature; and a miracle, which can be explained upon physical principles, ceases to be such. Whatever surpassed their comprehension was regarded by the an-

cients as a miracle, and every extraordinary degree of information attained by an individual, as well as any unlooked-for occurrence, was referred to some peculiar interposition of the deity. Hence among the ancients, the followers of different divinities, far from denying the miracles performed by their opponents, admitted their reality, but endeavoured to surpass them; and thus in the "life of Zoroaster," we find that able innovator frequently entering the lists with hostile enchanters, admitting but exceeding the wonderful works they performed; and thus also when the thirst of power, or of distinction, divided the sacerdotal colleges, similar trials of skill would ensue, the successful combatant being considered to derive his knowledge from the more powerful god. That the science on which each party depended was derived from experimental physics, may be proved.

1. by the conduct of the Thaumaturgists, or wonder-workers: 2. from what they themselves had said concerning magic; the genii invoked by the magicians, sometimes denoting physical or chemical agents employed, sometimes men who cultivated the science.

[4] All the three orders of Magi enumerated by Porphyry, abstained from wine and women, and the first of these orders from animal food.

[5] Vol. ii. p. 287.

[6] See Tobit. chap. viii. v. 2 and 2.

[7] Elias, as quoted by Becker.

[8] There is no mention made of the word -Devil- in the Old Testament, but only of -Satan-: nor do we meet with it in any of the heathen authors who say anything about the devil in the signification attached to it among christians; that is, as a creature revolted from God. Their theology went no farther than to evil genii, or

demons, who harassed and persecuted mankind, though we are still aware that many curious - nick–names are given to the prince of darkness both by ancient and modern writers.

III. ON THE SEVERAL KINDS OF MAGIC.

The pretended art of producing, by the assistance of words and ceremonies, such events as are above the natural power of men, was of several kinds, and chiefly consisted in invoking the good and benevolent, or the wicked and malignant spirits. The first, which was called Theurgia, was adopted by the wisest of the Pagan world, who esteemed this as much as they

despised the latter, which they called Goetia.

Theurgia was by the philosophers accounted a divine art, which only served to raise the mind to higher perfection, and to exalt the soul to a greater degree of purity; and they who by means of this kind of magic, were imagined to arrive at what is called intuition, wherein they enjoyed an intimate intercourse with the deity, were believed to be invested with divine power; so that it was imagined nothing was impossible for them to perform; all who made profession of this kind of magic aspired to this state of perfection. The priest, who was of this order, was to be a man of unblemished morals, and all who joined with him were bound to a strict purity of life. They were to abstain from women, and from animal food; and were forbid to defile themselves by the touch of a dead body. Nothing was to be forgotten in their rites

and ceremonies; the least omission or mistake, rendered all their art ineffectual: so that this was a constant excuse for their not performing all that was required of them, though as their sole employment (after having arrived to a certain degree of perfection, by fasting, prayer, and other methods of purification) was the study of universal nature, they might gain such an insight into physical causes, as would enable them to perform actions, that should fill the vulgar with astonishment; and it is hardly to be doubted, but this was all the knowledge that many of them aspired to. In this sort of magic, Hermes Tresmegistus and Zoroaster excelled, and indeed it gained great reputation among the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, Indians and Jews. In times of ignorance, a piece of clock-work, or some other curious machine, was sufficient to entitle the inventor to the works of

magic; and some have even asserted, that the Egyptian magic, rendered so famous by the writings of the ancients, consisted only in discoveries drawn from the mathematics, and natural philosophy, since those Greek philosophers who travelled into Egypt, in order to obtain a knowledge of the Egyptian sciences, returned with only a knowledge of nature and religion, and some rational ideas of their ancient symbols.

But it can hardly be doubted, that magic in its grossest and most ridiculous sense was practised in Egypt, at least among some of the vulgar, long before Pythagoras or Empedocles travelled into that country. The Egyptians had been very early accustomed to vary the signification of their symbols, by adding to them several plants, ears of corn, or blades of grass, to express the different employments of hus-

bandry; but understanding no longer their meaning nor the words that had been made use of on these occasions, which were equally unintelligible, the vulgar might mistake these for so many mysterious practices observed by their fathers; and hence they might conceive the notion, that a conjunction of plants, even without being made use of as a remedy, might be of efficacy to preserve or procure health. "Of these," adds the Abbe Pluche, "they made a collection, and an art by which they pretended to procure the blessings, and provide against the evils of life." By the assistance of these, men even attempted to hurt their enemies; and indeed the knowledge of poisonous or useful simples, might on particular occasions give sufficient weight to their empty curses and innovations. But these magic incantations, so contrary to humanity, were detested, and punished

by almost all nations; nor could they be tolerated in any.

Pliny, after mentioning an herb, the throwing of which into an army, it was said, was sufficient to put it to the route, asks, where was this herb when Rome was so distressed by the Cambri and Teutones? Why did not the Persians make use of it when Lucullus cut their troops to pieces?

But amongst all the incantations of magic, the most solemn, as well as the most frequent, was that of calling up the spirits of the dead; this indeed was the very acme of their art; and the reader cannot be displeased with having this mystery here elucidated. An affection for the body of a person, who in his life time was beloved, induced the first natives to inter the dead in a decent manner, and to add to this melancholy instance of esteem, those wishes

which had a particular regard to their new state of existence. The place of burial, conformable to the custom of characterising all beloved places, or those distinguished by a memorable event, was pointed out by a large stone or pillar raised upon it. To this place families, and when the concern was general, multitudes repaired every year, when, upon this stone, were made libations of wine, oil, honey, and flour; and here they sacrificed and ate in common, having first made a trench in which they burnt the entrails of the victim into which the libation and the blood were made to flow. They began with thanking God with having given them life, and providing them necessary food; and then praised him for the good examples they had been favoured with. From these melancholy rites were banished all licentiousness and levity, and while other customs changed, these continued the

same. They roasted the flesh of the victim they had offered, and eat it in common, discoursing on the virtues of him they came to lament.

All other feasts were distinguished by names suitable to the ceremonies that attended them. These funeral meetings were simply called the manes, that is, the assembly. Thus the manes and the dead were words that became synonimous. In these meetings, they imagined that they renewed their alliance with the deceased, who, they supposed, had still a regard for the concerns of their country and family, and who, as affectionate spirits, could do no less than inform them of whatever was necessary for them to know. Thus, the funerals of the dead were at last converted into methods of divination, and an innocent institution of one of the grossest pieces of folly and superstition. But they did not stop here; they became so extravagantly

credulous, as to believe that the phantom drank the libations that had been poured forth, while the relations were feasting on the rest of the sacrifice round the pit: and from hence they became apprehensive lest the rest of the dead should promiscuously throng about this spot to get a share of the repast they were supposed to be so fond of, and leave nothing for the dear spirit for whom the feast was intended. They then made two pits or ditches, into one of which they put wine, honey, water, and flour, to employ the generality of the dead; and in the other they poured the blood of the victim; when sitting down on the brink, they kept off, by the sight of their swords, the crowd of dead who had no concern in their affairs, while they called him by name, whom they had a mind to cheer and consult, and desired him to draw near.[9]

The questions made by the living were very

intelligible; but the answers of the dead were not so easily understood; the priests, therefore, and the magicians made it their business to explain them. They retired into deep caves, where the darkness and silence resembled the state of death, and there fasted, and lay upon the skins of the beasts they had sacrificed, and then gave for answer the dreams which most affected them; or opened a certain book appointed for that purpose, and gave the first sentence that offered.[10] At other times the priest, or any person who came to consult, took care at his going out of the cave, to listen to the first words he should hear, and these were to be his answer. And though they had not the most remote relation to the mutter in question, they were twisted so many ways, and their sense so violently wrested, that they made them signify almost anything they pleased. At other

times they had recourse to a number of tickets, on which were some words or verses, and these being thrown into an urn, the first that was taken out was delivered to the family.[11] Health, prosperity in worldly affairs, and all that was intermixed in the good or evil of this world were regulated by the responses or signs which these equivocal, not to say less than absurd, means afforded, of prying into the womb of future events.

AUGURY, OR DIVINATIONS DRAWN FROM THE FLIGHT AND FEEDING OP BIRDS.

The superstitious fondness of mankind for searching into futurity has given rise to an infinite variety of extravagant follies. The Romans, who were remarkably fertile in these sorts of demonological inventions, suggested numerous ways of divination. With them all Nature had a voice, and the most senseless beings, and

most trivial things, the most trifling incidents, became presages of future events; which introduced ceremonies founded on a mistaken knowledge of antiquity, the most childish and ridiculous, and which were performed with all the air of solemnity and sanctity of devotion. Augury, or divinations founded on the flight of birds, were not only considered by the Egyptians as the symbols of the winds, but good and bad omens of every kind were founded or rather derived from the flying of the feathered tribe. The birds at this time had become wonderfully wise; and an owl, to whom, for reasons not precisely known, light is not so agreeable as darkness, could not pass by the windows of a sick person in the night, where the creature was not offended by the glimmerings of a light or candle, but his hooting must be considered as prophesying, that the life of the poor man was nearly

wound up.

Amongst the Romans, these auguries were taken usually upon an eminence: after the month of March they were prohibited in consequence of the moulting season having commenced; nor were they permitted at the waning of the moon, nor at any time in the afternoon, or when the air was the least ruffled by winds or clouds. The feeding of the sacred chickens, and the manner of their taking the corn that was offered to them, was the most common method of taking the augury. Observations were also made on the chattering or singing of birds, the hooting of crows, pies, owls, etc., and from the running of beasts, as heifers, asses, rams, hares, wolves, foxes, weasels and mice, when these appeared in uncommon places, crossed the way, or ran to the right or left. They also pretended to draw a good or bad omen from the most trifling ac-

tions or occurrences of life, as sneezing, stumbling, starting, numbness of the little finger, the tingling of the ear, the spilling of salt upon the table, or the wine upon one's clothes, the accidental meeting of a bitch with whelp, etc. It was also the business of the augur to interpret dreams, oracles, and prodigies.

Nothing can be so surprising than to find so wise and valorous a people as the Romans addicted to such childish fooleries. Scipio, Augustus, and many others, without any fatal consequences, despised the -sacred- chickens, and other arts of divination: but when the generals had miscarried in any enterprise, the people laid the whole blame on the negligence with which these oracles had been consulted: and if an unfortunate general had neglected to consult them, the blame of miscarriage was thrown upon him who had preferred his own forecast to

that of the fowls; while those who made these kinds of predictions a subject of raillery, were accounted impious and profane. Thus they construed, as a punishment of the gods, the defeat of Claudius Pulcher; who, when the sacred chickens refused to eat what was set before them, ordered them to be thrown into the sea; ”If they won’t eat,” said he, ”they shall drink.”

ARUSPICES, OR DIVINATIONS DRAWN FROM BRUTE, OR HUMAN SACRIFICES.

In the earliest ages of the world, a sense of piety and a regard to decency had introduced the custom of never sacrificing to Him, whence all blessings emanated, any but the soundest,

the most healthy, fat and beautiful animals; which were always examined with the closest and most exact attention. This ceremonial, which doubtless had its origin in gratitude, or in some ideas of fitness and propriety, at length, degenerated into trifling niceties and superstitious ceremonies. And it having been once imagined that no favour was to be looked for from the gods, when the victim was imperfect, the idea of perfection was united with abundance of trivial circumstances. The entrails were examined with peculiar care, and if the whole was without blemish, their duties were fulfilled; under an assurance that they had engaged the gods to be on their side, they engaged in war, and in the most hazardous undertakings, with such a confidence of success, as had the greatest tendency to procure it. All the motions of the victims that were led to the altar, were considered

as so many prophecies. If the victim advanced with an easy and natural air, in a straight line, and without offering any resistance,–if he made no extraordinary bellowing when he received the blow,–if he did not get loose from the person who led him to the sacrifice, it was deemed a certain prognostic of an easy and flowing success.

The victim was knocked down, but before its belly was ripped open, one of the lobes of the liver was allotted to those who offered the sacrifice, and the other to the enemies of the state. That which was neither blemished nor withered, of a bright red, and neither smaller nor larger than it ought to be, prognosticated great prosperity to those for whom it was set apart; that which was livid, small or corrupted, presaged the most fatal mischiefs. The next thing to be considered was the heart, which

was also examined with the utmost care, as was the spleen, the gall, and the lungs; and if any of these were let fall, if they smelt rank or were bloated, livid or withered, it presaged nothing but misfortunes.

After the examination of the entrails was over, the fire was kindled, and from this also they drew several presages. If the flame was clear, if it mounted up without dividing, and went not out till the victim was entirely consumed, this was a proof that the sacrifice was accepted; but if they found it difficult to kindle the fire, if the flame divided, if it played around instead of taking bold of the victim, if it burnt ill, or went out, it was a bad omen. The business, however, of the Aruspices was not confined to the altars and sacrifices, they had an equal right to explain all other portents. The Senate frequently consulted them on the most extraordi-

nary prodigies. The college of the Aruspices, as well as those of the other religious orders, had their registers and records, such as memorials of thunder and lightning,[12] the Tuscan histories,[13] etc.

DIVISIONS OP DIVINATION BY THE ANCIENTS–PRODIGIES, ETC.

Divination was divided by the ancients into artificial and natural. The first is conducted by reasoning upon certain external signs, considered as indications of futurity; the other con-

sists in that which presages things from a mere internal sense, and persuasion of the mind, without any assistance of signs; and is of two kinds, the one from nature, and the other by influx. The first supposes that the soul, collected within itself, and not diffused or divided among the organs of the body, has from its own nature and essence, some fore-knowledge of future things; witness, for instance, what is seen in dreams, ecstasies, and on the confines of death. The second supposes the soul after the manner of a mirror to receive some secondary illumination from the presence of God and other spirits. Artificial divination is also of two kinds: the one argues from natural causes, as in the predictions of physicians relative to the event of diseases, from the tongue, pulse, etc. The second the consequence of experiments and observations arbitrarily instituted, and is mostly su-

perstitious. The systems of divination reduceable under these heads are almost incalculable. Among these were the Augurs or those who drew their knowledge of futurity from the flight, and various other actions of birds; the Aruspices, from the entrails of beasts; palmestry or the lines of the hands; points marked at random; numbers, names, the motions of a scene, the air, fire, the Praenestine, Homerian, and Virgilian lots, dreams, etc.

Whoever reads the Roman historians[14] must be surprised at the number of prodigies which are constantly recorded, and which frequently filled the people with the most dreadful apprehensions. It must be confessed, that some of these seem altogether supernatural; while much the greater part only consist of some of the uncommon productions of nature, which superstition always attributed to a superior cause,

and represented as the prognostication of some impending misfortunes. Of this class may be reckoned the appearance of two suns, the nights illuminated by rays of light, the views of fighting armies, swords, and spears, darting through the air; showers of milk, of blood, of stones, of ashes, of frogs, beasts with two heads, or infants who had some feature resembling those of the brute creation. These were all dreadful prodigies, which filled the people with inexpressible astonishment, and the Roman Empire with an extreme perplexity; and whatever unhappy circumstance followed upon these, was sure to be either caused or predicted by them.[15]

FOOTNOTES:

[9] Homer gives the same account of those ceremonies, when Ulysses raised the soul of Tiresias; and the same usages are found in the poem of Silius Italicus. And to these ceremonies the scriptures frequently allude, when the Israelites are forbid to assemble upon high places.

[10] The magical slumbers produced in the cave of Trophonius are justly ascribed to medicated beverages. Here, the votary if he escaped with life, had his health irreparably injured, and the whole class of artificial dreams and visions, the effect of some powerful nar-

cotic acting upon the body after the mind had been predisposed for a certain train of ideas.

[11] The -sortes praenestinae- were famous among the Greeks. The method by which these lots were conducted was to put so many letters or even whole words, into an urn; to shake them together, and throw them out; and whatever should chance to be made out in the arrangement of these letters or words, composed the answer of the oracle. The ancients also made use of dice, drawing tickets, etc., in casting or deciding results. In the Old Testament we meet with many standing and perpetual laws, and a number of particular commands, prescribing and regulating the use of them. We are informed by the Scripture that when a successor to Judas in the apostolate was to be chosen, the lot fell on St. Mathias. And the garment or coat without a seam of our Saviour was lotted

for by the Jews. In Cicero's time this mode of divination was at a very low ebb. The -sortes Homericae- and -sortes Virgilianae- which succeeded the -sortes Praenestinae-, gave rise to the same means used among christians of casually opening the sacred books for directions in important circumstances; to learn the consequence of events and what they had to fear among their rulers.

[12] Kennet's Roman Antiquities, Lib. XI, C. 4.

[13] Romulus, who founded the institution of the Aruspices, borrowed it from the Tuscans, to whom the Senate afterwards sent twelve of the sons of the principal nobility to be instructed in these mysteries, and the other ceremonies of their religion. The origin of this act among the people of Tuscany, is related by Cicero in the following manner: "A peasant," says he,

"ploughing in the field, his ploughshare running pretty deep in the earth, turned up a clod, from whence sprung a child, who taught him and the other Tuscans the art of divination." (Cicero, De Divinat. l. 2.) This fable, undoubtedly means no more, than that this child, said to spring from the clod of earth, was a youth of a very mean and obscure birth, but it is not known whether he was the author of it, or whether he learnt it of the Greeks or any other nations.

[14] Particularly Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pliny, and Valerius Maximus.

[15] Nothing is more easy than to account for these productions, which have no relation to any events that may happen to follow them. The appearance of two suns has frequently happened in England, as well as in other places, and is only caused by the clouds being placed in such a situation, as to reflect the image of

that luminary; nocturnal fires, enflamed spears, fighting armies, were no more than what we call the Aurora Borealis or northern lights, or ignited vapours floating in the air; showers of stones, of ashes, or of fire, were no other than the effects of the eruptions of some volcano at a considerable distance; showers of milk were caused by some quality in the air, condensing, and giving a whitish colour to the water; and those of blood are now well known to be only the red spots left upon the earth, on stones and leaves of trees, by the butterflies which hatch in hot and stormy weather.

IV. HISTORY OF ORACLES–THE PRINCIPAL ORACLES OF ANTIQUITY.

Few superstitions have been so famous, and so seductive to the minds of men during a number of ages, as oracles. In treaties of peace or truces, the Greeks never forgot to stipulate for the liberty of resorting to oracles. No colony undertook new settlements, no war was declared,

no important affair begun, without first consulting the oracles.

The most renowned oracles were those of Delphos, Dodona, Trophonius, Jupiter Hammon, and the Clarian Apollo. Some have attributed the oracles of Dodona to oaks, others to pigeons. The opinion of those pigeon-prophetesses was introduced by the equivocation of a Thessalian word, which signified both a pigeon and a woman; and gave room to the fable, that two pigeons having taken wing from Thebes, one of them fled into Lybia, where it occasioned the establishing of the oracle of Jupiter Hammon; and the other, having stopped in the oaks of the forest of Dodona, informed the inhabitants of the neighbouring parts, that it was Jupiter's intention there should be an oracle in that place. Herodotus has thus explained the fable: there were formerly two Priestesses of

Thebes, who were carried off by Phenecian merchants. She that was sold into Greece, settled in the forest of Dodona, where great numbers of the ancient inhabitants of Greece went to gather acorns. She there erected a little chapel at the foot of an oak, in honour of the same Jupiter, whose priestess she had been; and here it was this ancient oracle was established, which in after times became so famous. The manner of delivering the oracles of Dodona was very singular. There were a great number of kettles suspended from trees near a copper statue, which was also suspended with a hunch of rods in its hand. When the wind happened to put it in motion, it struck the first kettle, which communicating its motion to the next, all of them tingled, and produced a certain sound which continued for a long time; after which the oracle spoke.

THE ORACLE OP JUPITER HAMMON.

This oracle, which was in the desert, in the midst of the burning sands of Africa, declared to Alexander that Jupiter was his father. After several questions, having asked if the death of his father was suddenly revenged, the oracle answered, that the death of Philip was revenged, but that the father of Alexander was immortal. This oracle gave occasion to Lucan to put great sentiments in the mouth of Cato. After the battle of Pharsalia, when Cesar be-

gan to be master of the world. Labrenus said to Cato: "As we have now so good an opportunity of consulting so celebrated an oracle, let us know from it how to regulate our conduct during this war. The gods will not declare themselves more willingly for any one than Cato. You have always been befriended by the gods, and may therefore have the confidence to converse with Jupiter. Inform yourselves of the destiny of the tyrant and the fate of our country; whether we are to preserve our liberty, or to lose the fruit of the war; and you may learn too what that virtue is to which you have been elevated, and what its reward."

Cato, full of the divinity that was within him, returned to Labrenus an answer worthy of an oracle: "On what account, Labrenus, would you have me consult Jupiter? Shall I ask him whether it be better to lose life than liberty? Whether life

be a real good? We have within us, Labrenus, an oracle that can answer all these questions. Nothing happens but by the order of God. Let us not require of him to repeat to us what he has sufficiently engraved in our hearts. Truth has not withdrawn into those deserts; it is not graved on those sands. The abode of God is in heaven, in the earth, in the sea, and in virtuous hearts. God speaks to us by all that we see, by all that surrounds us. Let the inconstant and those that are subject to waver, according to events, have recourse to oracles. For my part, I find in nature every thing that can inspire the most constant resolution. The dastard, as well as the brave, cannot avoid death. Jupiter cannot tell us more." Cato thus spoke, and quitted the country without consulting the oracle.

THE ORACLE OF DELPHOS, OR PYTHIAN APOLLO.

Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and several other authors relate, that a herd of goats discovered the oracle of Delphos, or of the Pythian Apollo. When a goat happened to come near enough the cavern to breathe air that passed out of it, she returned skipping and bounding about, and her voice articulated some extraordinary sounds; which having been observed by the keepers, they went to look in, and were seized with a fury which made them jump about, and foretel future events. Coretas, as Plutarch tells, was the name of the goat-herd who discovered the oracle. One of the guardians of Demetrius, coming too near the mouth of the cavern, was suffocated by the force of the exhalations, and died suddenly. The orifice or vent-hole of the cave was covered with a tripod consecrated to Apollo, on which the priestesses, called Pythonesses,[16] sat, to fill themselves with the prophetic vapour,

and to conceive the spirit of divination, with the fervor that made them know futurity, and foretel it in Greek hexameters. Plutarch says, that, on the cessation of oracles, a Pythoness was so excessively tormented by the vapour, and suffered such violent convulsions, that all the priests ran away, and she died soon after.

CEREMONIES PRACTISED ON CONSULTING ORACLES.

Pausanias describes the ceremonies that were practiced for consulting the oracle of Trophonius. Every man that went down into his cave, never laughed his whole life after. This gave occasion to the proverbial saying concerning those of a melancholy air: ”He has consulted Tro-

phonius." Plato relates, that the two brothers, Agamedes and Trophonius, having built the temple of Apollo, and asked the god for a reward what he thought of most advantage to men, both died in the night that succeeded their prayer. Pausanias gives us a quite different account. In the palace there built for the King Hyrieus, they so laid a stone, that it might be taken away, and in the night they crept in through the hole they had thus contrived, to steal the king's treasures. The king observing the quantity of his gold diminished, though no locks nor seals had been broken open, fixed traps about his coffers, and Agamedes being caught in one of them, Trophonius cut off his head to prevent his discovering him. Trophonius having disappeared that moment, it was given out that the earth had swallowed him on the same spot; and impious superstition went so far as to place

this wicked wretch in the rank of the gods, and to consult his oracle with ceremonies equally painful and mysterious.

Tacitus thus speaks of the oracle of the Clarian Apollo: Germanicus went to consult the oracle of Claros. It is not a woman that delivers the oracle there, as at Delphos, but a man chosen out of certain families, and always of Miletum. It is sufficient to tell him the number and names of those who come to consult him; whereupon he retires into a grot, and having taken some water out of a well that lies hid in it, he answers you in verses to whatever you have thought of, though this man is often very ignorant.

Dion Cassius explains the manner in which the oracle of Nymphoea, in Epirus, delivered its responses. The party that consulted took incense, and having prayed, threw the incense

into the fire, the flame pursued and consumed it. But if the affair was not to succeed, the incense did not come near the fire, or if it fell into the flame, it started out and fled. It so happened for prognosticating futurity, in regard to every thing that was asked, except death and marriage, about which it was not allowed to ask any questions.

Those who consulted the oracle of Amphiarus, lay on the skins of victims, and received the answer of the oracle in a dream. Virgil attests the same thing of the oracle of Faunus in Italy.

A governor of Cilicia, who gave little credit to oracles, and who was always surrounded by unbelieving Epicureans sent a letter sealed with his signet to the oracle of Mopsus, requiring one of those answers that were received in a dream. The messenger charged with the letter brought it back in the same condition, not

having been opened; and informed him, that he had seen in a dream a very well made man, who said to him 'Black' without the addition of even another word. Then the governor opening the letter, assured the company, that he wanted to know of the divinity, whether he should sacrifice a white or black bull.

In the temple of the goddess of Syria, when the statue of Apollo was inclined to deliver oracles, it deviated, moved, and was full of agitations on its pedestals. Then the priests carrying it on their shoulders, it pushed and turned them on all sides, and the high-priest, interrogating it on all sorts of affairs, if it refused its consent, it drove the priests back; if otherwise, it made them advance.

Suetonius says, that, some months before the birth of Augustus, an oracle was current, importing, that nature was labouring at the pro-

duction of a king, who would be master of the Roman Empire; that the Senate in great consternation, had forbid the rearing of any male children who should be born that year, but that the senators whose wives were pregnant, found means to hinder the inscribing of the decree in the public registers. It seems that the prediction, of which Augustus was only the type, regarded the birth of Jesus Christ, the spiritual king of the whole world; or that the wicked spirit was willing, by suggesting this rigorous decree to the Senate, to depose Herod; and by this example, to involve the Messiah in the massacre that was made by his orders of all the children of two years and under. The whole world was then full of the coming of the Messiah. We see by Virgil's fourth eclogue, that he applies to the son of the Consul Asinius Pollio the prophecies which, from the Jews, had

then passed into foreign nations. This child the object of Virgil's flattery, died the ninth day after he was born. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus, applied to Vespasian the prophecies that regarded the Messiah.

ORACLES OFTEN EQUIVOCAL AND OBSCURE.

The oracles, were often very equivocal, or so obscure that their signification was not understood but after the event. A few examples, out of a great many, will be sufficient.

Croesus, having received from the Pythoness, this answer, that by passing the river Halys, he would destroy a great empire, he understood it to be the empire of his enemy, whereas he

destroyed his own. The oracle consulted by Pyrrhus, gave him an answer, which might be equally understood of the victory of Pyrrhus, and the victory of the Romans his enemies.

Aio te Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse.

The equivocation lies in the construction of the Latin tongue, which cannot be rendered in English. The Pythoness advises Croesus to guard against the mule.[17] The king of Lydia understood nothing of the oracle, which denoted Cyrus descended from two different nations, from the Medes by Mandana his mother, the daughter of Astyages; and by the Persians by his father Cambyses, whose race was by far less grand and illustrious. Nero had for answer from the oracle of Delphos, that seventy-three might prove fatal to him, he believed he was safe from all danger till age, but, finding himself deserted by every one, and hearing Galba proclaimed em-

peror, who was seventy-three years of age, he was sensible of the deceit of the oracle.

St. Jerome observes, that, if the devils speak any truth, by whatever accident they always join lies to it and use such ambiguous expressions, that they may be equally applied to contrary events.

URIM AND THUMMIM.

Whilst the false oracles of demons deceived the idolatrous nations, truth had retired from among the chosen people of God. The septuagint have interpreted -Urim- and -Thummim-, manifestation and truth, [Greek: daelosin is alaetheian]; which expresses how different those divine oracles were from the false and equivocal demons. It is said, in the Book of Numbers, that Eleazar, the successor of Aaron, shall interrogate Urim in form, and that a resolution shall be taken

according to the answer given.

The Ephod applied to the chest of the sacerdotal vestments of the high-priest, was a piece of stuff covered with twelve precious stones, on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved. It was not allowed to consult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, but for the king, the president of the sanhedrim, the general of the army, and other public persons, and on affairs that regarded the general interest of the nation. If the affair was to succeed, the stones of the ephod emitted a sparkling light, or the high-priest inspired predicted the success. Josephus, who was born thirty-nine years after Christ, says that it was then two hundred years since the stones of the ephod had given an answer to consultations by their extraordinary lustre.

The Scriptures only inform us, that Urim and Thummim were something that Moses had

put in the high-priest's breast-plate. Some Rabbins by rash conjectures, have believed that they were two small statues hidden within the breast-plate; others, the ineffable name of God, graved in a mysterious-manner. Without designing to discern what has not been explained to us, we should understand by -Urim- and -Thummim-, the divine inspiration annexed to the consecrated breast-plate.

Several passages of Scripture leave room to believe, that an articulate voice came forth from the propitiatory, or holy of holies, beyond the veil of the tabernacle, and that this voice was heard by the high-priest. If the Urim and Thummim did not make answer, it was a sign of God's anger. Saul abandoned by the spirit of the Lord, consulted it in vain, and obtained no sort of answer. It appears by some passages of St. John's Gospel, that in the time of Christ, the exercise

of the chief-priesthood, was still attended with the gift of prophecy.

REPUTATION OF ORACLES, HOW LOST.

When men began to be better instructed by the lights philosophy had introduced into the world, the false oracles insensibly lost their credit. Chrysippus filled an entire volume with false or doubtful oracles. Oenomanus,[18] to be revenged of some oracle that had deceived him, made a compilation of oracles, to shew their absurdity and vanity. But Oenomanus is still more out of

humour with the oracle for the answer which Apollo gave the Athenians, when Xerxes was about to attack Greece with all the strength of Asia. The Pythian declared, that Minerva, the protectress of Athens, had endeavoured in vain to appease the wrath of Jupiter; yet that Jupiter, in complaisance with his daughter, was willing the Athenians should secure themselves within wooden walls; and that Salamis should behold the loss of a great many children, dead to their mothers, either when Ceres was spread abroad, or gathered together. At this Oenomanus loses all patience with the Delphian God: "This contest," exclaims he, "between father and daughter, is very becoming the deities! It is excellent that there should be contrary inclinations and interests in heaven! Poor wizzard, thou art ignorant who the children are that shall see Salamis perish; whether Greeks or Persians.

It is certain they must either be one or the other; but thou needest not have told so openly that thou knowest not what. Thou concealest the time of the battle under these fine poetical expressions '-either when Ceres is spread abroad, or gathered together-:' and thou wouldst cajole us with such pompous language! who knows not that if there be a sea-fight, it must either be in seed-time or harvest? It is certain it cannot be in winter. Let things go how they will, thou wilt secure thyself by this Jupiter whom Minerva is endeavouring to appease. If the Greeks lose the battle, Jupiter proved inexorable to the last; if they gain it, why then Minerva at length prevailed."[19]

Eusebius has preserved some fragments of this criticism on oracles by Oenomanus. "I might," says Origen, "have recourse to the authority of Aristotle, and the Peripatetics, to make the

Pythoness much suspected. I might extract from the writings of Epicurus and his sectators an abundance of things to discredit oracles; and I might shew that the Greeks themselves made no great account of them."

The reputation of oracles was greatly lessened when they became an artifice of politics. Themistocles, with a design of engaging the Athenians to quit Athens, in order to be in a better condition to resist Xerxes, made the Pythoness deliver an oracle, commanding them to take refuge in wooden walls. Demosthenes said, that the Pythoness philippised, to signify that she was gained over by Philip's presents.

CESSATION OF ORACLES.

The cessation of oracles is attested by several prophane authors, as Strabo, Juvenal, Lucien.

Lucan, and others, Plutarch accounts for the cause of it, either that the benefits of the gods are not eternal, as themselves are; or that the genii who presided over oracles, are subject to death; or that the exhalations of the earth had been exhausted. It appears that the last reason had been alleged in the time of Cicero, who ridicules it in his second book of Divination,

as if the spirit of prophecy, supposed to be excited by subterranean effluvia, had evaporated by length of time, as wine or pickle by being kept is lost.

Suidas, Nicephorus, and Cedrenus relate, that Augustus having consulted the oracle of Delphos, could obtain no other answer but this: 'the Hebrew child whom all the gods obey, drives me hence, and sends me back to hell: get out of this temple without speaking one word.' Suidas adds, that Augustus dedicated an altar in the Capitol, with the following inscription:

"-To the eldest Son of God-."

Notwithstanding these testimonies, the answer of the oracle of Delphos to Augustus seems very suspicious. Cedrenus cites Eusebius for this oracle, which is not now found in his works; and Augustus' peregrination into Greece was eighteen years before the birth of Christ.

Suidas and Cedrenus give an account also of an ancient oracle delivered to Thules, a king of Egypt, which they say is well authenticated. This king having consulted the oracle of Seraphis, to know if there ever was, or would be, one so great as himself, received this answer:–"First, God, next the word, and the spirit with them. They are equally eternal, and make but one whose power will never end. But thou, mortal, go hence, and think that the end of man's life is uncertain."

Van Dale, in his Treatise of oracles, does not believe that they ceased at the coming of Christ. He relates several examples of oracles consulted till the death of Theodosius the Great. He quotes the laws of the Emperors Theodosius, Gratian, and Valentinian, against those who consulted oracles, as a certain proof that the superstition of oracles still existed in the

time of those emperors.

HAD DEMONS ANY SHARE IN THE ORACLES?

The opinion of those who believe that the demons had no share in the oracles, and that the coming of the Messiah made no change in them: and the contrary opinion of those who pretend that the incarnation of the word imposed a general silence on oracles, should be equally rejected. The reasons appear from what has been said, and therefore two sorts of oracles ought to

be distinguished, the one dictated by the spirits of darkness, who deceived men by their obscure and doubtful answers, the other the pure artifice and deceit of the priests of false divinities.[20] As to the oracles given out by demons, the reign of Satan was destroyed by the coming of the Saviour; truth shut the mouth of falsehood; but Satan continued his old craft among idolaters. All the devils were not forced to silence at the same time by the coming of the Messiah; it was on particular occasions that the truth of christianity, and the virtue of Christians imposed silence on the devils. St. Athanasius tells the pagans, they have been witnesses themselves that the sign of the cross puts the devils to flight, silences oracles, and dissipates enchantments.

This power of silencing oracles, and putting the devils to flight, is also attested by Arnobius,

Lactantius, Prudentius, Minutius, Felix, and several others. Their testimony is a certain proof that the coming of the Messiah had not imposed a general silence on oracles.

The Emperor Julian, called the Apostate, consulting the oracle of Apollo, in the suburbs of Antioch, the devil could make him no other answer, than that the body of St. Babylas, buried in the neighbourhood, imposed silence on him. The Emperor, transported with rage and vexation, resolved to revenge his gods, by eluding a solemn prediction of Christ. He ordered the Jews to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem; but in beginning to dig the foundations, balls of fire burst out, and consumed the artificers, their tools and materials. These facts are attested by Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan, and the emperor's historian; and by St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Theodoret,

Sozomen and Socrates, in their ecclesiastical histories. The sophist Libanius, who was an enemy of the Christians, confessed also that St. Babylas had silenced the oracle of Apollo, in the suburbs of Antioch.

Plutarch relates that the pilot Thamus heard a voice in the air, crying out:–"The great Pan is dead:" whereupon Eusebius observes, that the deaths of the demons were frequent in the reign of Tiberius, when Christ drove out the wicked spirits. The same judgments may be passed on oracles as on possessions. It was on particular occasions, by the divine permission, that the Christians cast out devils, or silenced oracles, in the presence and even by the confession of the pagans themselves. And thus it is we should, it seems, understand the passages of St. Jerom, Eusebius, Cyril, Theodoret, Prudentius, and other authors, who said, that the

coming of Christ had imposed silence on the oracles.

OF ORACLES, THE ARTIFICES OP PRIESTS OP FALSE DIVINITIES.

As regards the second sort of oracles, which were pure artifices and cheats of the priests of false divinities, and which probably exceeded the numbers of those that immediately proceed from demons, they did not cease till idolatry was abolished, though they had lost their credit

for a considerable time before the coming of Christ. It was concerning this more common and general sort of oracles that Minutius Felix said, they began to discontinue their responses, according as men began to be more polite. But, howsoever decried oracles were, impostors always found dupes; the grossest cheats having never failed.

Daniel discovered the imposture of the priests of Bel, who had a private way of getting into the temple, to take away the offered meats, and made the king believe that the idol consumed them. Mundus, being in love with Paulina, the eldest of the priestesses of Isis, went and told her that the god Anubis, being passionately fond of her, commanded her to give him a meeting. She was afterwards shut up in a dark room, where her lover Mundus (whom she believed to be the god Anubis,) was concealed. This impos-

ture having been discovered, Tiberius ordered those detestable priests and priestesses to be crucified, and with them Iolea Mundus's free woman, who had conducted the whole intrigue. He also commanded the temple of Isis to be levelled with the ground, her statue to be thrown into the Tiber, and, as to Mundus, he contented himself with sending him into banishment.

Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, not only destroyed the temples of the gods, but discovered the cheats of the priests, by shewing that the statues, some of which were of brass, and others of wood, were hollow within, and led into dark passages made in the wall.

Lucius in discovering the impostures of the false prophet Alexander, says, that the oracles were chiefly afraid of the subtilties of the Epicureans and Christians. The false prophet Alexander sometimes feigned himself seized with a di-

vine fury, and by means of the herb sopewort, which he chewed, frothed at the mouth in so extraordinary a manner, that the ignorant people attributed it to the power of the god he was possessed by. He had long before prepared the head of a dragon made of linen, which opened and shut its mouth by means of a horses hair. He went by night to a place where the foundations of a temple were digging, and having found water, either of a spring or rain that had settled there, he hid in it a goose egg, in which he had inclosed a little serpent that had just been hatched. The next day, very early in the morning, he came quite naked into the street, having only a scarf about his middle, holding in his hand a scythe, and tossing about his hair as the priests of Cybele; then getting on the top of a high altar, he said that the place was happy to be honoured by the birth of a god. Afterwards

running down to the place where he had hid the goose egg, and going into the water, he began to sing the praises of Apollo and Aesculapius, and to invite the latter to come and shew himself to men; with these words he dips a bowl into the water and takes out a mysterious egg, which had a god enclosed in it, and when he held it in his hand, he began to say that he held Aesculapius, whilst all were eager to have a sight of this fine mystery, he broke the egg, and the little serpent starting out, twisted itself about his fingers.

These examples shew clearly, that both Christians and pagans were so far agreed as to treat the greater number of oracles as purely human impostures.

From the very nature of things, much that now serves for amusement must formerly have been appropriated to a higher destination. Ven-

triloquism may be quoted as a case in point, affording a ready and plausible solution of the oracular stones and oaks, of the reply which the seer Nessus addressed to Pythagoras, (Jamblichus, Vit. Pyth. xxxiii.) and of the tree which at the command of the Gymnosophists, of upper Egypt, spoke to Apollonius, "The voice," says Philostratus (Vit. Ap. xi. 5) "was distinct but weak, and similar to the voice of a woman." But the oracles, at least if we ascend to their origin, were not altogether impostures. The pretended interpreters of the decrees of destiny were frequently plunged into a sort of delirium, and when inhaling the fumes of some intoxicating drug or powerful gas or vapour, or drinking some beverage which produced a temporary suspension of the reason, the mind of the enquirer was predisposed to feverish dreams:[21] if priestcraft were concerned in the interpretation of such

dreams, or eliciting senses from the wild effusions of the disordered brain of the Pythoness, Science presided over the investigation of the causes of this phrenzy, and the advantages which the Thaumaturgists might derive from it. Jamblicus states (de Mysterius C. xxix) that for obtaining a revelation from the Deity in a dream, the youngest and most simple creatures were the most proper for succeeding: they were prepared for it by magical invocations and fumigations of particular perfumes. Porphyry declares that these proceedings had an influence on the imagination; Jamblicus that they rendered them more worthy of the inspiration of the Deity.

FOOTNOTES:

[16] The responses here were delivered by a young priestess called Pythia or Phoebas, placed on a tripos, or stool with three feet, called also cortina, from the skin of the serpent Python with which it was covered, it is uncertain after what manner these oracles were delivered, though Cicero supposes the Pythoness was inspired, or rather intoxicated by certain vapours which ascended from the cave. Some say that the Pythoness being once debauched, the oracles were afterwards delivered by an old woman in the dress of a young maid.

[17] This answer of the oracle brings to our recollection the equally remarkable injunction of a modern seer to Sir William Windham, which is related in the memoirs of Bishop Newton. ”In his younger years, when Sir William was abroad upon his travels, and was at Venice, there was a noted fortune-teller, to whom great numbers resorted, and he among the rest; and the fortune-teller told him, that he must beware of a white horse. After his return to England, as he was walking by Charing-Cross, he saw a crowd of people coming out and going in to a house, and inquired what was the meaning of it, was informed that Duncan Campbell, the dumb fortune-teller lived there. His curiosity also led him in, and Duncan Campbell likewise told him that he must beware of a white horse. It was somewhat extraordinary that two fortune-tellers, one at Venice and the other in

London, without any communication, and at some distance of time, should both happen to hit upon the same thing, and to give the very same warning. Some years afterwards, when he was taken up in 1715, and committed to the Tower upon suspicion of treasonable practices, which never appeared, his friends said to him that his fortune wan now fulfilled, the Hanover House was the white horse whereof he was admonished to beware. But some time after this, he had a fall from a white horse, and received a blow by which he lost the sight of one of his eyes."

[18] "When we come to consult thee," says he to Apollo, "if thou seest what is in the womb of futurity, why dost thou use expressions which will not be understood? If thou dost, thou takest pleasure in abusing us: if thou dost not, be informed of us, and learn to speak more

clearly. I tell thee, that if thou intendest an equivoque, the Greek word whereby thou affirmest that Croesus should overthrow a great empire, was ill-chosen; and that it could signify nothing but Croesus conquering Cyrus. If things must necessarily come to pass, why dost thou amuse us with thy ambiguities? What dost thou, wretch as thou art, at Delphi, employed in muttering idle prophecies!"–See "-Demonologia, or Natural Knowledge revealed-" p. 162.

[19] See -Demonologia-, p, 163.

[20] "Among the more learned, it is a pretty general opinion that all the oracles were mere cheats and impostures; calculated either to serve the avaricious ends of the heathenish priests, or the political views of the princes. Bayle positively asserts, that they were mere human artifices, in which the devil had no hand. In this opinion he is strongly supported by Van Dale, a

Dutch physician, and M. Fontenelle, who have expressly written on the subject."—Vide Demonologia-, op. citat. p. 159.

[21] We learn from Herodotus (iv. 75) that the Scythians and Tartars intoxicated themselves by inhaling the vapour of a species of hemp thrown upon red hot stones. And the odour of the seeds of henbane alone, when its power is augmented by heat, produces a choleric and quarrelsome disposition, in those who inhale the vapour arising from them in this state. And in the "Dictionnaire de Medecine," (de l'Encyclopedie Methodique, vii, art. Jusquiaume) instances are quoted, the most remarkable of which is, that if a married pair who, though living in perfect harmony every where else, could never remain for a few hours in the room where they worked without quarrelling. The apartment of course was thought to be bewitched, until it

was discovered that a considerable quantity of seeds of henbane were deposited near the stove, which was the cause of their daily dissensions, the removal of which put an end to their bickerings. The same effects that were produced by draughts and fumigations would follow from the application of liniments, of ”Magical Unctions,” acting through the absorbent system, as if they had been introduced into the stomach: allusions to these ointments are constantly recurring in ancient authors. Philostratus, in his life of Apollonius (iii. 5) states that the bodies of his companions, before being admitted to the mysteries of the Indian sages, were rubbed over with so active an oil, that it appeared as if they were bathed with fire.

V. THE BRITISH DRUIDS, OR MAGI–ORIGIN OF FAIRIES–ANCIENT SUPERSTITIONS—-THEIR SKILL IN MEDECINE, &C.

The British Druids, like the Indian Gymnosophists, or the Persian Magi, had two sets of doctrines; the first for the initiated; the second for the people. That there is one God the creator of heaven and earth, was a secret doctrine of the Brachmans. And the nature and perfection of the deity were among the druidical arcana.

Among the sublimer tenets of the druidical priesthood, we have every where apparent proofs of their polytheism: and the grossness of their religious ideas, as represented by some writers, is very inconsistent with that divine philosophy which has been considered as a part of their character. These, however, were popular divinities which the Druids ostensibly worshipped, and popular notions which they ostensibly adopted, in conformity with the prejudices of the vulgar. The Druids well knew that the common people were no philosophers.

There is reason also, to think that a great part of the idolatries were not sanctioned by the Druids, but afterwards introduced by the Phoenician colony. But it would be impossible to say how far the primitive Druids accommodated themselves to vulgar superstition, or to separate their exterior doctrines and ceremonies from the fables and absurd rites of subsequent times. It would be vain to attempt to enumerate their gods: in the eye of the vulgar they defied everything around them. They worshipped the spirits of the mountains, the vallies, and the rivers. Every rock and every spring were either the instruments or the objects of admiration. The moonlight vallies of Danmonium were filled with the fairy people, and its numerous rivers were the resort of genii.

The fiction of fairies is supposed to have been brought, with other extravagancies of a like na-

ture from the Eastern nations, whilst the Europeans and Christians were engaged in the holy war: such at least is the notion of an ingenious writer, who thus expresses himself: "Nor were the monstrous embellishments of enchantments the invention of romancers, but formed upon Eastern tales, brought thence by travellers from their crusades and pilgrimages, which indeed, have a cast peculiar to the wild imagination of the Eastern people."[22]

That fairies, in particular, came from the East, we are assured by that learned orientalist, M. Herbelot, who tells us that the Persians called the fairies -Peri-, and the Arabs -Genies-, that according: to the Eastern fiction, there is a certain country inhabited by fairies, called Gennistan, which answers to our -fairy-land-.[23] Mr. Martin, in his observations on Spencer's Fairy Queen, is decided in his opinion, that the

fairies came from the East; but he justly remarks, that they were introduced into the country long before the period of the crusades. The race of fairies, he informs us, was established in Europe in very early times, but, ”-not universally-.” The fairies were confined to the north of Europe–to the -ultima Thule—to the -British isles—to the -divisis orbe Britannis-. They were unknown at this remote era to the Gauls or the Germans: and they were probably familiar to the vallies of Scotland and Danmonium, when Gaul and Germany were yet unpeopled either by real or imaginary beings. The belief indeed, of such invisible agents assigned to different parts of nature, prevails at this very day in Scotland, Devonshire and Cornwall, regularly transmitted from the remotest antiquity to the present times, and totally unconnected with the spurious romance of the crusader or the pilgrim.

Hence those superstitious notions now existing in our western villages, where the spriggian[24] are still believed to delude benighted travellers, to discover hidden treasures, to influence the weather, and to raise the winds. "This," says Warton, "strengthens the hypotheses of the northern, parts of Europe being peopled by colonies from the east!"

The inhabitants of Shetland and the Isles pour libations of milk or beer through a holed-stone, in honour of the spirit Brownie; and it is probable the Danmonii were accustomed to sacrifice to the same spirit, since the Cornish and the Devonians on the border of Cornwall, invoke to this day the spirit Brownie, on the swarming of their bees.

With respect to rivers, it is a certain fact that the primitive Britons paid them divine honours; even now, in many parts of Devonshire and

Cornwall, the vulgar may be said to worship brooks and wells, to which they resort at stated periods, performing various ceremonies in honour of those consecrated waters: and the Highlanders, to this day, talk with great respect of the genius of the sea; never bathe in a fountain, lest the elegant spirit that resides in it should be offended and remove; and mention not the water of rivers without prefixing to it the name of -excellent-; and in one of the western islands the inhabitants retained the custom, to the close of the last century, of making an annual sacrifice to the genius of the ocean. That at this day the inhabitants of India deify their principal rivers is a well known fact; the waters of the Ganges possess an uncommon sanctity; and the modern Arabians, like the Ishmaelites of old, concur with the Danmonii in their reverence of springs and fountains. Even the names

of the Arabian and Danmonian wells have a striking correspondence. We have the -singing-well-; or the -white-fountain-, and there are springs with similar names in the deserts of Arabia. Perhaps the veneration of the Danmonii for fountains and rivers may be accepted as no trivial proof, to be thrown into the mass of circumstantial evidence, in favour of their Eastern original. That the Arabs in their thirsty deserts, should even adore their wells of "springing water," need not excite our surprise, but we may justly wonder at the inhabitants of Devonshire and Cornwall thus worshipping the gods of numerous rivers, and never failing brooks, familiar to every part of Danmonium.

The principal times of devotion among the Druids were either mid-day or midnight. The officiating Druid was cloathed in a white garment that swept the ground; on his head, he

wore the tiara; he had the -anguinum- or serpent's egg, as the ensign of his order; his temples were encircled with a wreath of oak-leaves, and he waved in his hand the magic rod. As regards the Druid sacrifice there are vague and contradictory representations. It is certain, however, that they offered human victims to their gods. They taught that the punishment of the wicked might be obliterated by sacrifices to Baal.[25] The sacrifice of the black sheep, therefore, was offered up for the souls of the departed, and various species of charms exhibited. Traces of the holy fires, and fire worship of the Druids[26] may be observed in several customs, both of the Devonians and the Cornish; but in Ireland may still be seen the holy fires in all their solemnity. The Irish call the month of May -Bel-tine-, or fire of Belus; and the first of May Lubel-tine, or the day of Belus's fire. In an old Irish glossary,

it is mentioned that the Druids of Ireland used to light two solemn fires every year, through which all four-footed beasts were driven, as a preservative against contagious distempers. The Irish have this custom at the present moment, they kindle the fire in the milking yards; men, women, and children pass through or leap over it, and their cattle are driven through the flames of the burning straw, on the -first of May-; and in the month of November, they have also their fire feasts when, according to the custom of the Danmonians, as well as the Irish Druids, the hills were enveloped in flame. Previously to this solemnity (on the eve of November) the fire in every private house was extinguished; hither, then, the people were obliged to resort, in order to rekindle it. The ancient Persians named the month of November, -Adur or fire-Adur, according to Richardson was the angel

presiding over that element, in consequence of which, on the ninth, his name-day, the country blazed all around with flaming piles, whilst the magi, by the injunction of Zoroaster, visited with great solemnity all the temples of fire throughout the empire; which, on this occasion, were adorned and illuminated in a most splendid manner. Hence our British illuminations in November had probably their origin. It was at this season that -Baal Samham- called the souls to judgment, which, according to their deserts, were assigned to re-enter the bodies of men or brutes, and to be happy or miserable during their next abode on the earth.

The primitive Christians, attached to their pagan ceremonies, placed the feast of All-Souls on the la Samon, or the second of November. Even now the peasants in Ireland assemble on the vigil of la Samon with sticks and clubs, go-

ing from house to house, collecting money, bread-cake, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., for the feast; repeating verses in honour of the solemnity, and calling for the black sheep. Candles are sent from house to house and lighted up on the Samon. (The next day.) Every house abounds in the best viands the master can afford; apples and nuts are eaten in great plenty; the nutshells are burnt, and from the ashes many things are foretold. Hempseed is sown by the maidens, who believe that, if they look back, they shall see the apparition of their intended husbands. The girls make various efforts to read their destiny; they hang a smock before the fire at the close of the feast, and sit up all night concealed in one corner of the room, expecting the apparition of the lover to come down the chimney and turn the -shimee-: they throw a ball of yarn out of the window, and wind it

on the reel within, convinced that if they repeat the Paternoster backwards, and look at the ball of yarn without, they shall then also see his apparition. Those who celebrate this feast have numerous other rites derived from the Pagans. They dip for apples in a tub of water, and endeavour to bring up one with their mouths; they catch at an apple when stuck on at one of the end of a kind of hanging beam, at the other extremity of which is fixed a lighted candle, and that with their mouths only, whilst it is in a circular motion, having their hands tied behind their backs.[27]

THE BRITISH MAGI.

The Druids, who were the magi of the Britons, had an infinite number of rites in common with the Persians. One of the chief functions of the Eastern magi, was divination; and Pomponius Mela tells us, that our Druids possessed the same art. There was a solemn rite of divination among the Druids from the fall of the victim and convulsions of his limbs, or the nature and position of his entrails. But the British priests had various kinds of divination. By the number of criminal causes, and by the increase or diminution of their own order, they predicted

fertility or scarcity. From the neighing or prancing of white horses, harnessed to a consecrated chariot–from the turnings and windings of a hare let loose from the bosom of the diviner (with a variety of other ominous appearances or exhibitions) they pretended to determine the events of futurity.[28]

Of all creatures the serpent exercised, in the most curious manner, the invention of the Druids. To the famous -anguinum- they attributed high virtues. The -anguinum- or serpent's egg, was a congeries of small snakes rolled together, and incrusted with a shell, formed by the saliva or viscous gum, or froth of the mother serpent. This egg, it seems was tossed into the air, by the hissings of its dam, and before it fell again to the earth (where it would be defiled) it was to be received in the sagus or sacred vestment. The person who caught the egg was to make his es-

cape on horseback, since the serpent pursues the ravisher of its young, even to the brink of the next river. Pliny, from whom this account is taken (lib. 29. C. 3.) proceeds with an enumeration of other absurdities relating to the anguinum. This -anguinum- is in British called -Glain-neider-, or the serpent of glass; and the same superstitious reverence which the Danmonii universally paid to the anguinum, is still discoverable in some parts of Cornwall. Mr. Llhuyd informs us that "the Cornish retain a variety of charms, and have still towards the Land's-End, the amulets of Maen-Magal and Glain-neider, which latter they call -Melprer-, and have a charm for the snake to make it, when they find one asleep, and stick a hazel wand in the centre of her spirae," or coils.

We are informed by Cambden that, "in most parts of Wales, and throughout all Scotland and

Cornwall, it is an opinion of the vulgar, that about midsummer-eve (though in the time they do not all agree) the snakes meet in companies, and that by joining heads together and hissing, a kind of bubble is formed, which the rest, by continual hissing, blow on till it passes quite through the body, when it immediately hardens, and resembles a glass-ring, which whoever finds shall prosper in all his undertakings. The rings thus generated are called -Gleiner-nadroeth-, or snake-stones. They are small glass amulets, commonly about half as wide as our finger rings, but much thicker, of a green colour usually, though sometimes blue, and waved with red and white."

Carew says, that "the country people, in Cornwall, have a persuasion that the snake's breathing upon a hazel wand produces a stone ring of blue colour, in which there appears the yel-

low figure of a snake, and that beasts bit and envenomed, being given some water to drink wherein this stone has been infused, will perfectly recover the poison."[29]

From the animal, the Druids passed to the vegetable world; and these also displayed their powers, whilst by the charms of the misletoe, the selago, and the samopis, they prevented or repelled diseases. From the undulation or bubbling of water stirred by an oak branch, or magic wand, they foretold events that were to come. The superstition of the Druids is even now retained in the western counties. To this day, the Cornish have been accustomed to consult their famous well at Madem, or rather the -spirit- of the well, respecting their future destiny.

"Hither," says Borlase, "come the uneasy, impatient, and superstitious, and by dropping pins[30]

or pebbles into the water, and by shaking the ground round the spring, so as to raise bubbles from the bottom, at a certain time of the year, moon and day, endeavour to remove their uneasiness; yet the supposed responses serve equally to encrease the gloom of the melancholy, the suspicions of the jealous, and the passion of the enamoured. The Castalian fountain, and many others among the Grecians were supposed to be of a prophetic nature. By dipping a fair mirror into a well, the Patraeans of Greece received, as they supposed, some notice of ensuing sickness or health from the various figures pourtrayed upon the surface. The people of Laconia cast into a pool, sacred to Juno, cakes of bread corn: if the cakes sunk, good was portended; if they swam, something dreadful was to ensue. Sometimes the superstitious threw three stones into the water, and formed their

conclusions from the several turns they made in sinking.” The Druids were likewise able to communicate, by consecration, the most portentous virtues to rocks and stones, which could determine the succession of princes or the fate of empires. To the Rocking or Logan stone, several of which remain still in Devonshire and Cornwall, in particular, they had recourse to confirm their authority, either as prophets or judges, pretending that its motion was miraculous. These religious rites were celebrated in consecrated places and temples, in the midst of groves. The mysterious silence of an ancient wood diffuses even a shade of horror over minds that are yet superior to superstitious credulity. Their temple was seldom any other than a wide circle of rocks perpendicularly raised. An artificial pile of large flat stone usually composed the altar; and the whole religious mountain was

usually enclosed by a low mound, to prevent the intrusion of the profane. "There was something in the Druidical species of heathenism," exclaims Mr. Whitaker, in a style truly oriental, "that was well calculated to arrest the attention and impress the mind. The rudely majestic circle of stones in their temples, the enormous Cromlech, the massy Logan, the huge Carnedde, and the magnificent amphitheatre of woods, would all very strongly lay hold upon that religious thoughtfulness of soul, which has ever been so natural to man, amid all the wrecks of humanity–the monument of his former perfection!" That Druidism, as existing originally in Devonshire and Cornwall, was immediately transported, in all its purity and perfection, from the East, seems extremely probable.

Among the sacred rites of the Druids there were none more celebrated than that they used

of the misletoe of the oak. They believed this tree was chosen by God himself. The misletoe was what they found but seldom: whenever, therefore, they met with it, they fetched it with great ceremony, and did it on the sixth day of the moon, with which day they began both their months and their years. They gave a name to this shrub, denoting that it had the virtue of curing all diseases. They sacrificed victims to it, believing that, by its virtue, the barren were made fruitful. They looked upon it likewise as a preservative against all poisons. Thus do several nations of the world place their religion in the observation of trifles.

The Druids were also extremely superstitious in relation to the herb -selago-, which they reckoned a preservative against sore eyes, and almost all misfortunes. Another herb called samotis, which they imagined had a virtue to prevent

diseases among cattle, they were very ceremonious about gathering. The person was obliged to be clad in white, and was not suffered to handle it; and the ceremony was preceded by a sacrifice of bread and wine.

The Druids had another superstition amongst them, in regard to their serpents' eggs, which they supposed were formed of the saliva of many of those creatures, at a certain time of the moon: these they looked upon as a sure prognostic of getting the better of their enemies. These, with many other ridiculous fooleries, were imposed upon the credulous people, as they were very much attached to divination. The Druids regarded the misletoe as an antidote against all poisons, and they preserved their selago against all misfortunes. The Persians had the same confidence in the efficacy of several herbs, and used them in a similar manner. The Druids cut

their misletoe with a golden hook, and the Persians cut the twigs of -Ghez-, or -haulm-, called -bursam-, with a peculiar sort of concentrated knife. The candidates for the British throne had recourse to the fatal stone to determine their pretensions; and on similar occasions the Persians had recourse to the -Artizoe-.

From every view of the Druid religion, Mr. Polwhele concludes that it derived its origin from the Persian magi. Dr. Borlasse has drawn a long and elaborate parallel between the Druids and Persians, where he has plainly proved that they resembled each other, as strictly as possible, in every particular of religion.[31]

FOOTNOTES:

[22] Supplement to the translated preface to Jarvis's Don Quixote.

[23] That the Druids worshipped rocks, stones, and fountains, and imagined them inhabited, and actuated by -divine intelligences of a lower rank-, may plainly be inferred from their stone monuments. These inferior deities the Cornish call -spriggian, or spirits-, which answer to genii or fairies; and the vulgar in Cornwall still discourse of them, as of real beings.

[24] See Macpherson's Introduction to the history of great Britain and Ireland.

[25] This idol, which is called by the Septuagint, Baal, is mentioned in other parts of scripture by other names. To understand what this god was, we may observe, that the deities of the Greeks and Romans come from the East; and it is a tradition among the ancient and modern heathens that this idol was an obscure deity, which may plead excuse for not translating some passages concerning it; and this is agreeable to Hosea (ix. 10). They -went out- into -Baal Pheor-, and -separated themselves to their shame-. And it is the opinion of Jerome, who quotes it from an ancient tradition of the Jews, that -Baal Pheor- is the -Priapus- of the Greeks and Romans; and if you look into the vulgar latin (1 Kings xv. 13.) we shall find it thus rendered, -and Asa, the King removed- Maacha, -his mother from being queen, that she might no longer be high Priestess in the sacrifices of

Priapus-. And he destroyed the grove she had consecrated, and broke the most filthy idol, and burnt it at the brook -Kedron-. Dr. Cumberland inserts, that the import of the word -Peor-, or -Baal Pheor-, is he that shews boastingly or publicly, his nakedness. Women to avoid barrenness, were to sit on this filthy image, as the source of fruitfulness; for which Lactantius and Augustine justly deride the heathens.

[26] There was an awful mysteriousness in the original Druid sacrifice. Descanting upon the human sacrifices of various countries, Mr. Bryant informs us, that among the nations of Canaan, -the- victims -were chosen in a peculiar manner-; their own children, and whatsoever was nearest and dearest to them, were thought the most worthy offerings to their gods! The Carthagenians, who were a colony from Tyre, carried with them the religion of their mother

country and instituted the same worship in the parts where they were seated. Parents offered up their own children as dearest to themselves, and therefore the more acceptable to the deity: they sacrificed ”the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul,” The Druids, no doubt, were actuated with the same views.

[27] There is no sort of doubt that -Baal- and -Fire- were principal objects of the ceremonies and adoration of the Druids. The principal season of these, and of their feasts in honour of Baal, was new year’s day, when the sun began visibly to return towards us; the custom is not yet at an end, the country people still burning out the old year and welcoming in the new by fires lighted on the top of hills, and other high places. The next season was the month of May, when the fruits of the earth began, in the Eastern countries, to be gath-

ered, and the first fruits of them consecrated to Baal, or to the -Sun-, whose benign influence had ripened them; and one is almost persuaded that the dance round the May pole, in that month, is a faint image of the rites observed on such occasions. The next great festival was on the 21st of June, when the sun, being in Cancer, first appears to go backwards and leave us. On this occasion the Baalim used to call the people together, and to light fires on high places, and to cause their sons, and their daughters, and their cattle to pass through the fire, calling upon Baal to bless them, and not forsake them.

[28] In Devonshire and Cornwall it is still considered ominous if a hare crosses a person on the road.

[29] See -Carew's Survey of Cornwall-, p. 22. Mr. Carew had a stone-ring of this kind in his

possession, and the person who gave it to him avowed, that "he himself saw a part of the stick sticking in it,"–but "-Penes authorem sit fides-," says Mr. Carew.

[30] The same superstition still exists in Devonshire.

[31] See account of Druidism in Polewhele's Historical Views of Devonshire, vol. 1.

VI. AESCULAPIAN MYSTERIES, &C.

Apollo is said to have been one of the most gentle, and at the same time, as may be inferred from his numerous issue, one of the most gallant of the heathen deities. The first and most noted of his sons was Aesculapius, whom he had by the nymph Coronis. Some say that Apollo, on account of her infidelity, shot his mother when big with child with him; but repenting the fact, saved the infant, and gave him to Chiron to be instructed in physic.[32] Others report,

that as King Phlegyas, her father was carrying her with him into Peloponnesus, her pains surprised her on the confines of Epidauria where, to conceal her shame, she exposed the infant on a mountain. The -truth-, however is, that this Aesculapius was a poor infant cast away, a dropt child, laid in a wood near Epidaurus, by his unnatural parents, who were afterwards ashamed to own him; he was shortly afterwards found by some huntsmen, who, seeing a lighted flame or glory surrounding his head, looked upon it as a prognostic of the child's future glory. The infant was delivered by them to a nurse named Trigo, but the poets say he was suckled by a goat. He studied physic under Chiron the centaur, by whose care he made such progress in the medical art, as gained him so high a reputation that he was even reported to have raised the dead. His first cures were wrought upon

Ascles, King of Epidaurus, and Aunes, King of Daunia, which last was troubled with sore eyes. In short, his success was so great, that Pluto, seeing the number of his ghosts daily decrease, complained to Jupiter, who killed him with his thunderbolts. Such was his proficiency in medical skill, that he was generally esteemed the god of physic.

In the city of Tetrapolis, which belonged to the Ionians, Aesculapius had a temple full of rare cures, dedicated to him by those who ascribed their recovery to him; and its walls were covered and hung with memorials of the miracles he had performed.

Cicero reckons up three of the names of Aesculapius. The first the son of Apollo, worshipped in Arcadia, who invented the probe and bandages for wounds; the second the brother of Mercury, killed by lightning; and the third the

son of Arsippus Arsione, who first taught the art of tooth-drawing and purging. Others make Aesculapius an Egyptian, King of Memphis, antecedent by a thousand years to the Aesculapius of the Greeks. The Romans numbered him among the Dii Adcititii, of such as were raised to heaven by their merit, as Hercules, Castor and Pollux. The Greeks received their knowledge of Aesculapius from the Phoenicians and Egyptians. His chief temples were at Pergamus, Smyrna, and Trica, a city of Ionia, and the isle of Coos, or Cos; in which all votive tablets were hung up,[33] shewing the diseases cured by his assistance: but his most famous shrine was at Epidaurus, where every five years in the spring, solemn games were instituted to him nine days after the Isthmian games at Corinth.

It was by accident that the Romans became acquainted with Aesculapius. A plague hap-

pened in Italy, the oracle was consulted, and the reply was that they should fetch the god Esculapius from Epidaurus. An embassy was appointed of ten senators, at the head of whom was Q. Ogulnius. These deputies, on their arrival, visiting the temple of the god, a huge serpent came from under the altar, and crossing the city, went directly to their ship, and lay down in the cabin of Ogulnius;[34] upon which they set sail immediately, and arriving in the Tiber, the serpent quitted the ship, and retired to a little island opposite to the city, where a temple was erected to the god, and the pestilence ceased.

The animals sacrificed to Aesculapius were the goat; some say on account of his having been nursed by this animal; others because this creature is unhealthy, as labouring under a perpetual fever. The dog and the cock were sacri-

ficed to him, on account of their fidelity and vigilance; the raven was also devoted to him for its forecast, and being skilled in divination. Authors are not agreed as to his being the inventor of physic, some affirming he perfected that part only which relates to the regimen of the sick.

The origin of this fable is as follows:–the public sign or symbol exposed by the Egyptians in their assemblies, to warn the people to mark the depth of the inundation of the Nile, in order to regulate their ploughing accordingly, was the figure of a man with a dog's head, carrying a pole with serpents twisted round it, to which they gave the name of Anubis,[35] Thaaut,[36] and Aesculapius.[37] In process of time, they made use of this representation for a real king, who by the study of physic, sought the preservation of his subjects. Thus the dog and the serpents became the characteristics of Aescu-

lapius amongst the Romans and Greeks, who were entirely strangers to the original meaning of these hieroglyphics.

Aesculapius was represented as an old man, with a long beard, crowned with a branch of bay tree; in his hands was a staff full of knots, about which a serpent had twisted itself: at his feet stood an owl or a dog–characteristics of the qualities of a good physician, who must be as cunning as a serpent, as vigilant as a dog, as cunning and experienced as an old bashaw, to handle a thing so difficult as physic. At Epidaurus his statue was of gold and ivory,[38] seated on a throne of the same materials, with a long beard, having a knotty stick in one hand, the other entwined with a serpent, and a dog lying at his feet. The Phliasians depicted him as beardless, and the Romans crowned him with a laurel, to denote his descent from Apollo. The

knots in his staff signify the difficulties that occur in the study of medicine. He had by his wife Epione two sons, Machaon and Podalirius, both skilled in surgery, and who are mentioned by Homer as having been present at the siege of Troy, and who were very serviceable to the Greeks. He had also two daughters, called Hygiaea and Jaso.

FOOTNOTES:

[32] Ovid, who relates the story of Coronis in his fanciful way, tells us that Corvus, or the raven, who discovered her armour, had by Apollo, his feathers changed from -black- to -white-.

[33] From these tablets, or votive inscriptions, Hippocrates is said to have collected his aphorisms.

[34] The Romans who sent for Aesculapius from Epidaurus, when their city was troubled with the plague, say, that the serpent that was worshipped there for him followed the ambassadors of its own accord to the ship that trans-

ported it to Rome, where it was placed in a temple built in the isle called Tiberina. In this temple the sick people were wont to lie, and when they found themselves no better, they reviled Aesculapius: so impatiently ungrateful and peevish were often the afflicted, that they made no scruple to reproach the very god who administered to their maladies.

[35] From Hannobeach, which, in the Phoenician language, signifies the -barker-, or -warner-, Anubis.

[36] This word signifies the dog.

[37] From -Aeish-, man, and -caleph-, dog, comes -Aescaleph-, the man-dog, or Aesculapius.

[38] This image was the work of Thrasymedes, the son of Arignotus, a native of Paros.

VII. INFERIOR DEITIES ATTENDING MANKIND PROM THEIR BIRTH TO THEIR DECEASE.

It would be almost an endless task to en-

ter into a detail of all the inferior deities of the Greeks and Romans; our object being to refer to such only as preside over the health of the human race, every part and parcel of whom had their presiding genius.–During pregnancy, the tutelar powers were the god Pelumnus,[39] and the goddesses Intercedonia,[40] and Deverra.[41] The import of these words seems to point out the necessity of warmth and cleanliness to ladies in this condition.

Besides the superior goddesses Jemo-Lucien, Diana Hythia, and Latona, who all presided at the birth, there were the goddesses Egeria,[42] Prosa,[43] and Manageneta,[44] who with the Dii Nixii,[45] had all the care of women in labour.

To children, Janus performed the office of door-keeper or midwife; and in this quality was assisted by the goddess Opis or Ops;[46] Cuma rocked the cradle, while Carmenta sung their

destiny; Levana lifted them up from the ground;[47] and Vegetanus took care of them when they cried; Rumina[48] watched them while they suckled; Polina furnished them with drink; and Edura with food or nourishment; Osslago knit their bones; and Carna[49] strengthened their constitutions. Nudina[50] was the goddess of children's purification; Stilinus or Statanus instructed them to walk, and kept them from falling; Fabulina learnt them to prattle; the goddess Paventia preserved them from frights;[51] and Camaena taught them to sing.

Nor was the infant, when grown to riper years, left without his protectors; Juventas was the god of youth; Agenoria excited men to action; and the goddesses Stimula and Strenua inspired courage and vivacity; Horta[52] inspired the fame or love of glory; and Sentra gave them the sentiments of probity and justice; Quies was the

goddesses of repose or ease,[53] and Indolena, or laziness, was deified by the name of Murcia;[54] Vacua protected the idle; Adeona and Abeona, secured people in going abroad and returning;[55] and Vibilia, if they wandered, was so kind as to put them in the right way; Fessonia refreshed the weary and fatigued; and Meditrina healed the sickly;[56] Vitula was the goddess of mirth and frolic;[57] Volupia the goddess who bestowed pleasure;[58] Orbona was addressed, that parents might not love their offspring; Pellonia averted mischief and danger; and Numeria taught people to cast and keep accounts; Angerona cured the anguish or sorrow of the mind;[59] Haeres Martia secured heirs the estates they expected; and Stata or Statua Mater, secured the forum or market place from fire; even the thieves had a protectress in Laverna;[60] Averruncus prevented sudden misfor-

tunes; and Conius was always disposed to give good advice to such as wanted it; Volumnus inspired men with a disposition to do well; and Honorus raised them to preferment and honours.

Nor was the marriage state without its peculiar defenders. Five deities were esteemed so necessary, that no marriages were solemnized without asking their favours; these were Jupiter-Perfectus, or the Adult, Juno, Venus, Suadela,[61] and Diana. Jugatinus tied the nuptial knot; Domiducus ushered the bride home; Domitius took care to keep her there, and prevent her gadding abroad; Maturna preserved the conjugal union entire; Virginensis[62] loosed the bridle zone or girdle; Viriplaca was a propitious goddess, ready to reconcile the married couple in case of any accidental difference. Matuta was the patroness of matrons, no maid being

suffered to enter her temple. The married was always held to be the only honourable state for woman, during the times of pagan antiquity. The goddess Vacuna,[63] is mentioned by Horace (Lib. 1. Epist. X. 49.) as having her temple at Rome; the rustics celebrated her festival in December, after the harvest was got in (Ovid. Fast. Lib. XI).

The ancients assigned the particular parts of the body to particular deities; the head was sacred to Jupiter; the breast to Neptune; the waist to Mars; the forehead to Genius; the eyebrows to Juno, the eyes to Cupid; the ears to Memory; the right hand to Fides or Veritas; the back to Pluto; the knees to Misericordia or mercy; the legs to Mercury; the feet to Thetis; and the fingers to Minerva.[64]

The goddess who presided over funerals was Libitina,[65] whose temple at Rome, the under-

takers furnished with all the necessaries for the interment of the poor or rich; all dead bodies were carried through the Porto Libitina; and the Rationes Libitinae mentioned by Suetonius, very nearly answer to our bills of mortality.

FOOTNOTES:

[39] Either from -pilum-, a pestle; or from -pello-, to drive away; because he procured a safe delivery.

[40] She taught the art of cutting wood with a hatchet to make fires.

[41] The inventress of brooms.

[42] From casting out the birth.

[43] Aulus Gellius.

[44] Aelian.

[45] From -erritor-, to struggle. See Ausonius, Idyll 12.

[46] Some make her the same with Rhea or

Vesta.

[47] Among the Romans the midwife always laid the child on the ground, and the father or somebody appointed, lifted it up; hence the expression of -tollere liberos-, to educate children.

[48] This goddess had a temple at Rome, and her offerings were milk.

[49] On the Kalends of June, sacrifices were offered to Carna, of bacon and bean flour cakes; whence they were called Fabariae.

[50] Boys were named always on the ninth day after the birth, and girls on the eighth.

[51] From Pavorema vertendo.

[52] She had a temple at Home which always stood open.

[53] She had a temple without the walls.

[54] Murcia had her temple on Mount Aventine.

[55] From -abeo-, to go away; and -adeo-, to come.

[56] The festival of this goddess was in September, when the Romans drank new wine mixed with old, by way of physic.

[57] From -vitulo-, to leap or advance.

[58] From -voluptas-, pleasure.

[59] In a great murrain which destroyed their cattle, the Romans invoked this goddess, and she removed the plague.

[60] The image was a head without a body. Horace mentions her (Lib. 1. Epist. XVI. 60). She had a temple without the walls, which gave the name to the Porta Lavernalis.

[61] The goddess of eloquence, or persuasion, who had always a great hand in the success of courtship.

[62] She was also called Cinxia Juno.

[63] She was an old Sabine deity. Some make

her the same with Ceres; but Varro imagines her to be the goddess of victory.

[64] From this distribution arose, perhaps, the scheme of our modern astrologers, who assign the different parts of the body to the different constellations, or signs of Zodiac: as the head to Aries, the neck to Taurus, the shoulders to Gemini, the heart to Cancer, the breast to Leo, and so on. The pretended issues of astrology have been always inseparable from stellar influence, and the zodiac has ever been the fruitful source of its solemn delusions.

[65] Some confound this goddess with Proserpine, others with Venus.

VIII. JUDICIAL ASTROLOGY–ITS CHEMICAL APPLICATION TO THE PROLONGATION OF LIFE AND HEALTH–ALCHYMICAL DELUSIONS.

The study of astrology, so flattering to human curiosity got into favour with mankind at

a very early period,–especially with the weak and ignorant. The first account, of it we meet with is in Chaldea; and at Rome it was known by the name of the ”Babylonish calculation,” against which Horace very wisely cautioned his readers.[66] It was doubtless the first method of divination, and probably prepared the mind of man for all the various methods since employed of searching into futurity; a brief view therefore of the rise of this pretended science cannot he improper in this place, especially as the history of these absurdities is the best method of confuting them. Others have ascribed the invention of this deception to the Arabs;–be this as it may, Judicial Astrology[67] has been too much used by the priests and physicians of all nations to encrease their own power and emolument. They maintain that the heavens are one great book, in which God has written

the history of the world; and in which every man may read his own fortune and the transactions of his time. In this department of astrology (judicial) we meet with all the idle conceits about the horary reign of planets, the - doctrine of horoscopes, the distribution of the houses, the calculation of nativities, fortunes, lucky and unlucky- hours, and other ominous fatalities. They assert that it had its rise from the same hands as astronomy itself;–that while the ancient Assyrians, whose serene unclouded sky favoured their celestial, observations, were intent on tracing the paths and periods of the heavenly bodies, they discovered a constant settled relation or analogy between them and things below; hence they were led to conclude these to be the fates or destinies (Parcae) so much talked of, which preside at our birth, and dispose of our future state.

The Egyptians, who derived their astrological superstitions from the Chaldeans, becoming ignorant of the astronomical hieroglyphics, by degrees looked upon the names of the signs as expressing certain powers with which they were invested, and as indications of their several offices. The sun, on account of its splendour and enlivening influence, was imagined to be the great mover of nature; the moon held the second rank of powers, and each sign and constellation a certain share in the government of the world. The ram, (Aries [symbol: Aries]) had a strong influence over the young of the flocks and herds; the balance, (Libra [symbol: Libra]) could inspire nothing but inclinations to good order and justice; and the scorpion, (Scorpio [symbol: Scorpio]) to excite only evil dispositions. In short, each sign produced the good or evil intimated by its name.

Thus, if a child happened to be born at the instant when the first star of the ram rose above the horizon, (when, in order to give this nonsense the air of a science, the star was supposed to have its greatest influence,) he would be rich in cattle; and he who should enter the world under the crab, would meet with nothing but disappointments, and all his affairs go backwards and downwards. The people were to be happy whose king entered the world under the sign Libra; but completely wretched if he should light under the horrid sign scorpion. Persons born under capricorn ([symbol: Capricorn]) especially if the sun at the same time ascended the horizon, were sure to meet with success, and rise upwards like the wild goat and the sun which then ascends for six months together. The lion, (Leo [symbol: Leo]) was to produce heroes; and the virgin (Virgo [symbol:

Virgo]) with her ear of corn to inspire chastity, and to unite virtue with abundance. Could anything he more extravagant and ridiculous!

The case was exactly the same with respect to the planets, whose influence is only founded on the wild supposition of their being the habitations of the pretended deities, whose names they bear, and the fabulous characters the poets have given them. Thus, to Saturn, [symbol: Saturn], they gave languid and even destructive influences, for no other reason but because they had been pleased to make this planet the residence of Saturn, who was painted with grey hairs and a scythe. To Jupiter [symbol: Jupiter] they gave the power of bestowing crowns and distributing long life, wealth, and grandeur, merely because it bears the name of the father of life. Mars [symbol: Mars] was supposed to inspire a strong inclination for war, because it was be-

lieved to be the residence of the god of war. Venus [symbol: Venus] had the power of rendering men voluptuous and fond of pleasure, because they had been pleased to give it the name of one who by some was thought to be the mother of pleasure. Mercury [symbol: Mercury], though almost always invisible, would never have been thought to superintend the property of states, and the affairs of wit and commerce, had not men, without the least reason, given it the name of one who was supposed to be the inventor of civil polity.

According to Astrologers, the power of the ascending planet is greatly increased by that of an ascending sign; then the benign influences are all united, and fall together on the head of all the happy infants who at that moment enter the world; yet can anything be more contrary to experience, which shews us, that the charac-

ters and events produced by persons born under the same aspect of the stars, are so far from being alike, that they are directly opposite.

"What completes the ridicule," says the Abbe La Pluche, to whom we are obliged for these judicious observations, "is, that what astronomers call the first degree of the ram, the balance, or of sagitarius, is no longer the first sign, which gives fruitfulness to the flocks, inspires men with a love of justice, or forms the hero. It has been found that all the celestial signs have, by degrees, receded from the vernal equinox, and drawn back to the East: notwithstanding this, the point of the zodiac that cuts the equator is still called the first degree of the ram, though the first star of the ram be thirty degrees beyond it, and all the other signs in the same proportion. When, therefore, any one is said to be born under the first degree of the ram,

it was in reality one of the degrees of pisces that then came above the horizon: and when another is said to be born with a royal soul and heroic disposition, because at his birth the planet Jupiter ascended the horizon, in conjunction with the first star of sagitary, Jupiter was indeed at that time in conjunction with a star thirty degrees eastward of sagitary, and in good truth it was the pernicious scorpion that presided at the birth of this happy, this incomparable child." And so it would, as Shakspeare says, "if my mother's cat had kittened. This," says our sagacious bard, "is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, (after the surfeit of our own behaviour) we make guilt of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, (traitors) by spherical predomi-

nance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on; an admirable evasion of a whoremaster to lay his goatish tricks to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail; and my nativity was under -Ursa major-; so that it follows I am rough and treacherous.– Tut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled at my bastardizing." Thus it is evident, that astrology is built upon no principles, that it is founded on fables, and on influences void of reality. Yet absurd as it is, and even was, it obtained credit; and the more it spread, the greater injury was done to the cause of virtue. Instead of the exercise of prudence and wise precautions, it substituted superstitious forms and childish practices; it enervated the courage

of the brave by apprehensions grounded on puns, and encouraged the wicked, by making them lay to the charge of a planet those evils which only proceeded from their own depravity.

But not content with such absurdities, which destroyed the very idea of liberty, they asserted that these stars, which had not the least connection with mankind, governed all the parts of the human body, and ridiculously affirmed that the ram presided over the head, the bull over the gullet, the twins over the breast, the scorpion over the entrails, the fishes over the feet, etc. The juggles of astrology have been admirably ridiculed by Butler in the following lines:

Some by the nose with fumes trepan 'em, As Dunstan did the devil's grannam; Others, with characters and words, Catch 'em, as men in nets do birds; And some with symbols, signs,

and tricks, Engrav'd in planetary nicks, With their own influence will fetch 'em Down from their orbs, arrest and catch 'em; Make 'em depose and answer to All questions, ere they let them go. Bombastus kept a devil's bird Shut in the pummel of his sword, And taught him all the cunning pranks Of past and future mountebanks. -Hudibras-, part ii. canto 3.

By means of the zodiac, astrologers pretended to account for the various disorders of the body, which were supposed to be in a good or had disposition, according to the different aspects[68] of these signs. To mention only one instance, they pretended that great caution ought to be used in taking medicine under Taurus, or the bull; because, as this animal chews his cud, the person would not be able to keep it in his stomach.

Each hour of the day had also its presiding

star. The number seven, as being that of the planets, became of mighty consequence. The seven days in the week,–a period of time handed down by tradition, happened to correspond with the number of the planets: and therefore they gave the name of a planet to each day; and from thence some days in the week were considered more fortunate or unlucky than the rest; and hence seven times seven, called the climacterical period of hours, days, or years, were thought extremely dangerous, and to have a surprising effect on private persons, the fortunes of princes, and the government of states. Thus the mind of man became distressed by imaginary evils, and the approach of these moments, in themselves as harmless as the rest of their lives, has by the strength of the imagination, brought on the most fatal effects.

Nay, the influence of the planets were ex-

tended to the bowels of the earth, where they were supposed to produce metals. From hence it appears that when superstition and folly are once on foot, there is no setting hounds to their progress. Gold, as a matter of course, must be the production of the sun, and the conformity in point of colour, brightness, and value, was a sensible proof of it. By the same mode of reasoning, the moon produced all the silver, to which it was related by colour; Mars, all the iron, which ought to be the favourite metal of the god of war. Venus presided over copper, which she might be well supposed to produce, since it was found in abundance in the isle of Cyprus, the supposed favourite residence of this goddess. In the same strain, the other planets presided over the other metals. The languid Saturn domineered over the lead mines, and Mercury, on account of his activity,

had the superintendency of quicksilver; while it was the province of Jupiter to preside over tin, as this was the only metal left him, it would appear, a kind of "Hobson's choice."

This will explain the manner in which the metals obtained the names of the planets; and from this opinion, that each planet engendered its own peculiar metal, they at length formed an idea that, as one planet was more powerful than another, the metal produced by the weakest was converted into another by the predominating influence of a stronger orb.

Lead, though really a metal, and as perfect in its kind as any of the rest, was considered only half a metal, which, in consequence of the languid influences of old Saturn, was left imperfect; and, therefore, under the auspices of Jupiter, it was converted into tin; under that of Venus, into copper: and at last into gold, un-

der some particular aspects of the sun. From hence, at length, arose the extravagant opinion of the alchymists, who, with amazing sagacity, endeavoured to find out means for hastening these changes or transmutations, which, as they conceived, the planets performed too slowly. The world, however, became at length convinced that the art of the alchymist was as ineffectual as the influences of the planets, which, in a long succession of ages, had never been known to change a mine of lead to that of tin or any other metal.[69]

The first author we are acquainted with who talks of making gold by the transmutation of one metal, by means of an alcahest[70] into another, is Zozimus the Pomopolite, who lived about the commencement of the fifth century, and who has a treatise express upon it, called, "The divine art of making gold and silver," in

manuscript, and is, as formerly, in the library of the King of France.

As regards the universal medicine, said to depend on alchemical research, we discover no earlier or plainer traces than in this author, and in Aeneas Gazeus, another Greek writer, towards the close of the same century;[71] nor among the physicians and materialists, from Moses to Geber the Arab,[72] who is supposed to have lived in the seventh century. In that author's work, entitled the "Philosopher's stone," mention is made of medicine that cures all leprous diseases. This passage, some authors suppose, to have given the first hint of the matter, though Geber himself, perhaps, meant no such thing; for, by attending to the Arabic style and diction of this author, which abounds in allegory, it is highly probable that by man he means gold, and by leprous, or other diseases,

the other metals, which, with relation to gold, are all impure.

The origin and antiquity of alchymy have been much controverted. If any credit may be placed on legend and tradition, it must be as old as the flood–nay, Adam himself is represented to have been an alchymist. A great part, not only of the heathen mythology, but of the Jewish Scriptures, are supposed to refer to it. Thus, Suidas[73] will have the fable of the philosopher's stone to be alluded to in the fable of the Argonauts; and others find it in the book of Moses, as well as in other remote places. But, if the era of the art be examined by the test of history, it will lose much of its fancied antiquity. The manner in which Suidas accounts for the total silence of alchymy among the old writers is, that Dioclesian procured all the books of the ancient Egyptians to be burnt; and that it was

in these the great mysteries of chemistry were contained.[74] Kercher asserts, that the theory of the philosopher's stone is delivered at large in the table of Hermes, and the ancient Egyptians were not ignorant of the art, but declined to prosecute it.

FOOTNOTES:

[66]

—— nec Babylonios Tentaris numeros.–Lib, 1. ad XI.

That is, consult not the tables of planetary calculations used by astrologers of Babylonish origin.

[67] This conjectural science is divided into natural and judicial. The first is confined to the study of exploring natural effects, as change of weather, winds and storms–hurricanes, thunder, floods, earthquakes, and the like. In this sense it is admitted to be a part of natural phi-

losophy. It was under this view that Mr. Good, Mr. Boyle, and Dr. Mead pleaded for its use. The first endeavours to account for the diversity of seasons from the situations, habitudes, and motions of the planets; and to explain an infinity of phenomena by the contemplation of the stars. The honourable Mr. Boyle admitted, that all physical bodies are influenced by the heavenly bodies; and the doctor's opinion, in his treatise concerning the power of the sun and moon, etc. is in favour of the doctrine. But these predictions and influence are ridiculed, and entirely exploded by the most esteemed modern philosophers, of which the reader may have a learned specimen in Rohault's Tract. Physic. pt. II. c 27.

[68] By aspect is to be understood an angle formed by the rays of two planets meeting on the earth, able to execute some natural power

or influence.

[69] Those who wish to read a curious monument of the follies of the alchymists, may consult the diary of Elias Ashmole, who is rather the historian of this vain science, than an adept. It may amuse literary leisure to turn over his quarto volume, in which he has collected the works of several English alchymists, to which he has subjoined his commentary. It affords curious specimens of Rosicrucian mysteries; and he relates stories, which vie for the miraculous, with the wildest fancies of Arabian invention.

[70] Alcahest, in chemistry, (an obsolete term,) means a most pure and universal menstruum or dissolvent, with which some chemists have pretended to resolve all bodies into their first elements, and perform other extraordinary and unaccountable operations.

[71] In this writer we find the following pas-

sage: "Such as are skilled in the ways of nature, can take; silver and tin, and changing their nature, can turn them into gold." He also tells us that he was "wont to call himself a -gold-melter- and a -chemist-."

[72] The principal Authors on alchymy are Geber, the Arab, Friar Bacon, Sully, John and Isaac Hallendus, Basil Valentine, Paracelsus, Van Zuchter, and Sendirogius.

[73] Corringius calls this statement in question, and asks how Suidas, who lived but five hundred yours between them, should know what happened eight hundred years before him? To which Borrichius the Dane, answers, that he had learnt it of Eudemus, Helladius, Zozimus, Pamphilius, and others, as Suidas himself relates.

[74] It does not appear that the Egyptians transmuted gold; they had ways of separating

it from all kinds of bodies, from the very mud of the Nile, and stones of all kinds: but, adds Kercher, these secrets were never written down, or made public, but confined to the royal family, and handed down traditionally from father to son.

IX. ALCHYMICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL CHIMERA.

Having so far explained the fragile basis on which human knowledge may be said to have depended, during the obscurity and barbarity of the middle ages, when the progress of true knowledge was obstructed by the most absurd fancies, and puerile conceits: when conjectures, caprices, and dreams supplied the place of the most useful sciences, and of the most important truths,

the subsequent illustrative reflections may serve as a guide to direct the attention of the reader to other delusions, which arose out of the general chaos.

Chemistry, a science so essentially requisite to explain the phenomena of known and unknown substances, was studied chiefly by jugglers and fanatics;–their systems, replete with metaphysical nonsense, and composed of the most crude and heterogeneous materials, served rather to nourish superstition than to establish facts, and illustrate useful truths. Universal remedies, in various forms, met with strenuous advocates and deluded consumers. The path of accurate observation and experiment was forsaken: instead of penetrating into the mysterious recesses of nature, they bewildered themselves in the labyrinth of fanciful speculation; they overstepped the bounds of good sense, mod-

esty, and truth; and the blind led the blind. The prolongation of life too was no longer sought for in a manner agreeable to the dictates of nature; even this interesting branch of human pursuits was rendered subservient to chemistry, or rather to the confused system of alchymy. Original matter was considered as the elementary cause of all beings, by which they expected literally to work miracles, to transmute the base into noble metals, to metamorphose man in his animal state by chemical processes, to render him more durable, and to secure him against early decline and dissolution. Millions of vessels, retorts, and phials, were either exposed to the action of the most violent artificial heat, or to the natural warmth of the sun; or else they were buried in some dunghill or other fetid mass, for the purpose of attracting this -original matter-, or obtaining it from putrescible substances.

As the metal called gold always bore the highest value, these crude philosophers concluded, from a ridiculous analogy, that its value with respect to the preservation of health and the cure of diseases, must likewise surpass that of all other remedies. The nugatory art of dissolving it, so as to render it potable, and to prevent it from again being converted into metal, employed a multitude of busy idiots, not only in concealed corners, but in the splendid laboratories of the great. Sovereigns, magistrates, counsellors, and impostors, struck with the common frenzy, entered into friendship and alliance, formed private fraternities, and sometimes proceeded to such a pitch of extravagance, as to involve themselves and their posterity in ruinous debts. The real object of many was, doubtless, to gratify their avarice and desire of aggrandisement: although this sinister motive was con-

cealed under the specious pretext of searching for a remedy that should serve as a tincture of life, both for the healthy and diseased, yet some among these whimsical mortals were actuated by more honourable motives, zealous only for the interest of truth, and the well-being of their fellow creatures.

The common people, in some countries, particularly Italy, Germany, and France often denied themselves the common necessaries of life, to save as much as would purchase a few drops of the tincture of gold, which was offered for sale by some superstitious or fraudulent chemist: and so thoroughly persuaded were they of the efficacy of this remedy, that it afforded them in every instance the most confident and only hope of recovery. These beneficial effects were positively promised, but were looked for in vain. All subduing death would not submit to be bribed

with gold, and disease refused to hold any intercourse with that powerful deity, who presides over the industry and commerce of all nations.

As, however, these diversified and almost numberless experiments were frequently productive of useful inventions in arts and manufactures; and, as many chemical remedies of real value were thereby accidentally discovered, great and almost general attention to those bold projectors was constantly kept alive and excited. Indeed, we are indebted to their curious observations, or rather perhaps to chance, for several valuable medicines, the excellence of which cannot be disputed, but which, nevertheless, require more precaution in their use and application, and more perspicuity and diligence in investigating their nature and properties than the original preparers of such articles were able

or willing to afford. All their endeavours to prolong life, by artificial means, could not be attended with beneficial effects; and the application of the remedies thus contrived, must necessarily, in many cases, have proved detrimental to the health of the patient.

In proof of this assertion, it will be sufficient to give a slight sketch of the different views and opinions of the gold-makers, Rosicrucians, manufacturers of astralian salts, drops of life, and tinctures of gold, hunters after the philosopher's stone, and other equally absurd chimera.

Some of these extravagant enthusiasts fancied that life resembled a flame, from which the body derived warmth, spirit, and animation. They endeavoured to cherish and increase the flame, and supplied the body with materials to feed it, as we pour oil into a burning lamp. Others imagined they had discovered

something invisible and incorporeal in the air, that important medium which supports the life of man. They pretended to catch, refine, reduce, and materialize this indefinable something, so that it might be swallowed in the form of powders, and drops; that, by its penetrating powers, it might insinuate itself into the whole animal frame, invigorate, and consequently qualify it for a longer duration.

Others again were foolish enough to indulge a notion that they could divest themselves of the properties of matter during this life; that in this manner they might be defended against the gradual approaches of dissolution, to which every animal body is subject: and that thus fortified, without quitting their terrestrial tabernacle, they could associate at pleasure with the inhabitants of the spiritual world. The sacred volume itself was interpreted and commented

upon by alchymists, with a view to render it subservient to their intended designs. Indisputable historical facts, recorded in this invaluable book, were treated by them as hieroglyphical symbols of chemical processes: and the fundamental truths of the christian religion were applied, in a wanton and blasphemous manner, to the purposes of making gold, and distilling the elixir of life.

The world of spirits was also invaded, and summoned, as it were, to contribute to the prolongation of human life. Spirits were supposed to have the dominion of air, fire, earth, and water; they were divided into distinct classes, and particular services ascribed to each. The malevolent spirits were opposed and counteracted by various means of prevention: the good and tutelary were obliged to submit to n sort of gentle, involuntary servitude. From invisi-

ble beings were expected and demanded visible means of assistance–riches, health, friends, and long life. Thus the poor spirits were profanely maltreated, nay, sometimes severely punished, and even miserably flogged in effigy, when they betrayed symptoms of disaffection, or want of implicit fealty.

As men had thus, in their weakness and folly, forsaken the bounds of this terrestrial sphere, it will easily be believed, that, with the help of an exuberant imagination, they would make a transition to the higher regions–to the celestial bodies and the stars to which, indeed, they ascribed no less a power than that of deciding the destinies of men, and which, consequently, must have had a considerable share in shortening or prolonging the duration of human life–every nation or kingdom was subjected to the dominion of its particular planet the time of

whose government was determined; and a number of ascendant powers were fictitiously contrived, with a view to reduce, under its influence, every thing which was produced and born under its administration. The professors of astrology appeared as the confidents of these invisible rulers, and the interpreters of their will; they were well versed in the art of giving a respectable appearance to this usurped dignity. Provided they could but ascertain the hour and minute of a person's birth, they confidently took upon themselves to predict his mental capacities, future vicissitudes of life, and the diseases he would be visited with, together with the circumstances, the day and hour of his death.[75]

Not only the common people, but persons of the highest rank and stations, nay, even men the most distinguished for their rank and abilities, did homage to those "gods of their idola-

try," and lived in continual dread of their occult powers. With anxious countenance and attentive ears, they listened to the cantrip effusions of these pretended oracles, which prognosticated the bright or gloomy days of futurity. Even physicians were solicitous to qualify themselves for appointments no less lucrative than respectable:–they forgot, over the dazzling hoards of Mammon, that they are peculiarly and professedly the pupils of nature.–The curious student in the universities found everywhere public lecturers, who undertook to instruct him in the profound arts of divination, chiromancy, and the -cabala-.

Among other instances, the following anecdote is related of the noted Thurneisen, who, in the seventeenth century, was invested, at Berlin, with the respectable offices of printer to the court, bookseller, almanack-maker, as-

trologer, chemist, and first physician. Messengers daily arrived from the most respectable houses in Germany, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, and even from England, for the purpose of consulting him respecting the future fortunes[76] of their new-born infants, acquainting him with the hour of the nativity, and soliciting his advice and directions as to their management. Many volumes of this singular correspondence are still preserved in the royal library at Berlin. The business of this fortunate adept increased so rapidly, that he found it necessary to employ a number of subaltern assistants, who, together with their master, realized considerable fortunes. He died in high reputation and favour with his superstitious contemporaries.

The famous Melancthon was a believer in judicial astrology, and an interpreter of dreams. Richelieu and Mazarin were so superstitious as

to employ and pension Morin, another pretender to astrology, who cast the nativities of these two able politicians. Nor was Tacitus himself, who generally appears superior to superstition, untainted with this folly, as may be seen from his twenty-second chapter of the sixth book of his Annals.

In the time of the civil wars, astrology was in high repute. The royalists and the rebels had their astrologers as well as their soldiers; and the predictions of the former had a great influence over the latter. When Charles the first was imprisoned, Lilly, the famous astrologer, was consulted for the hour that should favour his escape; and in Burnet's History of his own Times, there is a story which strongly proves how much Charles II was bigotted to judicial astrology, a man, though a king, whose mind was by no means unenlightened. The most re-

spectable characters of the age, Sir William Dugdale, Elias Ashmole,[77] Dr. Grew, and others, were members of the astrological club. Congreve's character of Foresight, in Love for Love, was then no uncommon person, though the humour, now, is scarcely intelligible. Dryden cast the nativities of his sons; and what is remarkable, his prediction relating to his son Charles, was accomplished. The incident being of so late a date, one might hope that it would have been cleared up; but, if it be a fact, it must be allowed that it forms a rational exultation for its irrational adepts. Astrologers were frequently, as may easily be understood, put to their wit's end when their predictions did not come to pass. Great winds were foretold, by one of the craft, about the year 1586. No unusual storms, however, happened. Bodin, to save the reputation of the art, applied it as a figure to

some revolutions in the state, of which there were instances enough at that time.

At the commencement of the 18th century, the -Illuminati-, a sect of astrologers, had excited considerable sensation on the continent. Blending philosophy with enthusiasm, and uniting to a knowledge of every chemical process a profound acquaintance with astronomy, their influence over the superstitious feelings of the people was prodigious; and in many instances the infatuation was attended with fatal consequences. We shall relate the following, as nearer home than many now before us.

THE HOROSCOPE, A TALE OF THE STARS.

On the summit of St. Vincent's rocks, in the neighbourhood of Clifton, looking on the Avon, as it rolls its lazy courses towards the Bristol Channel, stands an edifice, known by the name of "Cooke's Folly." It consists of a single round tower, and appears at a distance rather as the remnant of some extensive building, than a complete and perfect edifice, as it now exists. It was

built more than two centuries ago, by a man named Maurice Cooke; not, indeed, as a strong hold from the arms of a mortal enemy, but as a refuge from the evils of destiny. He was the proprietor of extensive estates in the neighbourhood; and while his lady was pregnant with her first child, as she was one evening walking in their domains, she encountered a strange looking gipsey, who, pestering her for alms, received but a small sum. The man turned over the coin in his hand, and implored a larger gift. "That," said the lady, "will buy you food for the present."

"Lady," said the gipsey, "it is not food for the wretched body that I require; the herbs of the field, and the waters of the ditch, are good enough for that. I asked your alms for higher purposes. Do not distrust me, if my bearing be prouder than my garments; do not doubt the

strength of my sunken eye, when I tell you that I can read the skies as they relate to the fate of men. Not more familiar is his hornbook to the scholar, than are the heavens to my knowledge."

"What, thou art an astrologer?"–"Aye, lady! my fathers were so before me, even in the times when our people had a home amidst the pyramids of the mighty–in the times when you are told the mightier prophets of the Israelites put the soothsayers of Egypt to confusion; idle tales! but if true, all reckless now. Judah's scattered sons are now desolate as ourselves; but they bend and bow to the laws and ways of other land–we remain in the stern stedfastness of our own."

"If then," returned the lady, "I give thee more money, how will it be applied?"

"That is not a courteous question, but I will

answer it. The most cunning craftsman cannot work without his tools, and some of mine are broken, which I seek to repair: another crown will be enough."

The lady put the required sum into his hand, and at the same time intimated a desire to have a specimen of his art.

"Oh! to what purpose should that be? why, why seek to know the course of futurity? destiny runs on in a sweeping and resistless tide. Enquire not what rocks await your bark: the knowledge cannot avail you, for caution is useless against stern necessity."–"Truly, you are not likely to get rich by your trade, if you thus deter customers."–"It is not for wealth I labour: I am alone on the earth, and have none to love. I will not mix with the world lest I should learn to hate. This present is nothing to me. It is in communion with the spirits who have lived

in the times that are past, and with the stars–those historians of the times to come–that I feel aught of joy. Fools sometimes demand the exertions of my powers, and sometimes I gratify their childish curiosity.” –”Notwithstanding I lie under the imputation of folly, I will beg that you predict unto me the fate of the child which I shall bear.”–”Well, you have obliged me, and I will comply. Note the precious moment at which it enters the world, and soon after you shall see me again.”

Within a week the birth of an heir awoke the clamorous joy of the vassals, and summoned the strange gipsey to ascertain the necessary points. These learned, he returned home; and the next day presented Sir Maurice with a scroll, containing the following lines:

”Twenty times shall Avon’s tide In chains of glistening ice be tied– Twenty times the woods

of Leigh Shall wave their brunches merril In spring burst forth in mantle gay, And dance in summer's scorching ray: Twenty times shall autumn's frown, Wither all their green to brown– And still the child of yesterday Shall laugh the happy hour away. That period past, another sun Shall not his annual journey run, Before a secret silent foe, Shall strike that boy a deadly blow. Such, and sure his fate shall be: Seek not to change his destiny."

The knight read it; and in that age, when astrology was considered a science as unerring as holy prophecies, it would have been little less than infidelity to have doubted the truth of the prediction. Sir Maurice, however, was wise enough to withhold the paper from his lady; and in answer to her inquiries, continually asserted that the gipsey was an impostor, and that the object of his assuming the character

was merely to increase her alms.

The fated child grew in health and beauty; and as we are the most usually the more strongly attached to pleasures in proportion to the brevity of continuance, so did the melancholy fate of his son more firmly fix him in the heart of Sir Maurice. Often did the wondering lady observe the countenance of her husband with surprise, as watching the endearing sportiveness of the boy, his countenance, at first brightened by the smile of paternal love, gradually darkened to deepest grief, till unable to suppress his tears, he would cover the child with caresses, and rush from the room. To all inquiries, Sir Maurice was silent, or returned evasive answers.

We shall pass over the infancy of young Walter, and resume the narrative at the period in which he entered into his twentieth year. His mother was now dead, and had left two other

children, both girls, who, however, shared little of their father's love, which was almost exclusively fixed on Walter, and appeared to encrease in strength as the fatal time grew near.

It is not to be supposed that he took no precaution against the predicted event. Sometimes hope suggested that a mistake might have been made in the horoscope, or that the astrologer might have overlooked some sign which made the circumstance conditional; and in unison with the latter idea he determined to erect a strong building, where, during the year in which his doom was to be consumated, Walter might remain in solitude. He accordingly gave directions for raising a single tower, peculiarly formed to prevent ingress, except by permission of its inhabitants. The purpose of this strange building, however, he kept secret; and his neighbours, after numerous vain conjectures, gave

it the name of "Cooke's Folly."

Walter, himself, was kept entirely ignorant of the subject, and all his inquiries were answered with tears. At length the tower was completed, and furnished with all things necessary for comfort and convenience; and on the eve of Walter's completing his twentieth year, Sir Maurice shewed him the gipsey's scroll, and begged him to make use of the retreat prepared for him till the year expired. Walter at first treated the matter lightly, laughed at the prophecy, and declared he would not lose a year's liberty if all the astrologers in the world were to croak their ridiculous prophecies against him. Seeing, however, his father so earnestly bent on the matter, his resolution began to give way, and at length he consented to the arrangement. At six the following morning, therefore, Walter entered the tower, which he fastened within as

strongly as iron burs would admit, and which was secured outside in a manner equally firm. He took possession of his voluntary prison with melancholy feelings, rather occasioned by the loss of present pleasure, than the fear of future pain. He sighed as he looked upon the wide domain before him, and thought how sad would it be to hear the joyous horn summoning his companions to the chase, and find himself prevented from attending it–to hear the winter wind howling round his tower, and rushing between the rocks beneath him, and miss the cheerful song and merry jest, which were wont to make even the blast a pleasant sound. Certainly his time passed as pleasantly as circumstances permitted. He drew up in a basket, at his meal hours, every luxury which the season produced. His father and sisters daily conversed with him from below, for a consider-

able time; and the morris-dancers often raised his laughter by their grotesque movements.

Weeks and months thus passed, and Walter still was well and cheerful. His own and his sisters' hopes grew more lively, but the anxiety of Sir Maurice increased. The day drew near which was to restore his son to his arms in confident security, or to fulfil the prediction which left him without an heir to his name and honours.

On the preceding afternoon Walter continually endeavoured to cheer his parent, by speaking of what he would do on the morrow; desired his sisters to send round to all their friends, that he might stretch his limbs once more in the merry dance; and continued to talk of the future with much confidence, that even Sir Maurice caught a spark of hope from the fiery spirits of the youth.

As the night drew on, and his sisters were about to leave him, promising to wake him at six by a song, in answer to their usual inquiry if he wanted anything more that night, "Nothing," said he, "and yet the night feels chilly, and I have little fuel left–send me one more faggot." This was sent him, and as he drew it up, "This," said he, "is the last time I shall have to dip for my wants, like an old woman for water: thank God! for it is wearisome work to the arm."

Sir Maurice still lingered under the window in conversation with his son, who at length complained of being cold and drowsy. "Mark," said he, as he closed the window, "mark father, Mars, the star of my fate, looks smilingly to-night, all will be well." Sir Maurice looked up–a dark cloud spot suddenly crossed the planet, and he shuddered at the omen. The anxious father could not leave the spot. Sleep he knew

it was vain to court, and he therefore determined to remain where he was. The reflexions that occupied his mind continually varied: at one time he painted to himself the proud career of his high spirited boy, known and admired among the mighty of his time; a moment after he saw the prediction verified, and the child of his love lying in the tomb. Who can conceive his feelings as hour dragged after hour, while he walked to and fro, watching the blaze of the fire in the tower, as it brightened and sunk again–now pacing the court with hasty steps, and now praying fervently for the preservation of his son? The hour came. The cathedral bell struck heavy on the father's heart, which was not to be lightened by the cheerful voices of his daughters, who came running full of hope to the foot of the tower. They looked up, but Walter was not there;–they called his name, he

answered not. "Nay," said the youngest, "this is only a jest; he thinks to frighten us, but I know he is safe." A servant had brought a ladder, which he ascended, and he looked in at the window. Sir Maurice stood immoveable and silent.–He looked up, and the man answered the anxious expression of his eyes. "He is asleep," said he. "He is dead!" murmured the father.

The servant broke a pane of glass in the window, and opening the casement, entered the room. The father, changing his gloomy stedfastness for frenzied anxiety, rushed up the ladder. The servant had thrown aside the curtains and the clothes, and displayed to the eyes of Sir Maurice, his son lying dead, a serpent twined round his arm, and his throat covered with blood. The reptile had crept up the faggot last sent him, and fulfilled the -prophecy-.

To this happy effort of the imagination in

favour of prying into futurity, may be added, with the same intention.

THE FATED PARRICIDE; AN ORIENTAL TALE OF THE STARS.

Ibrahim was universally celebrated for his riches and magnificence. His armies were formidable, his victories splendid, and his treasury inexhaustible. He enjoyed, moreover, what was ten thousand times more solid and more valuable than riches–the love and veneration of his sub-

jects; and he had a beautiful young wife, in whose endearing tenderness alone he could find happiness–if happiness could be found on earth. All these advantages entitled Ibrahim to the appellation of the Solomon of his age; and yet Ibrahim was not happy. A son was wanting to crown his felicity. In vain did a heart formed for all the charities of the wedded state, endeavour to supply the refusal of nature, by the adoption of a son; in vain did gratitude endeavour to deceive his heart, by caresses which any other would have thought to be the natural effusions of filial sensibility, of filial piety and affection; that heart incessantly perceived a solitude within itself. Even the consolatory visions of hope began to grow less frequent, when heaven at last heard his prayers, Alas! in the very instant that Fortune gratifies our fondest wishes, she often betrays us; and her

smiles are a thousand times more fatal than her frowns. The birth of the prince was celebrated throughout the empire by the customary public demonstrations of joy. The felicity of Ibrahim was complete. He was perpetually revolving in his mind the sentiments and hopes which the nation would form of the royal infant. Scarce was he born, when paternal solicitude embraced, as it were, his whole life. Impatient to know his destiny, that solicitude plunged into futurity, determined, if possible, to wrest from time, the secrets of which he was the hoary-headed guardian.

In Ibrahim's dominions were some sages particularly honoured with the confidence of heaven. He commanded them to consult the stars, and to report their answer. "Tremble," said the sages; "thou unfortunate father, tremble! Never before have the skies presented such inauspicious omens.

Let him fly; let this son, too dear to you, fly; let him avoid, if possible, the meeting with any savage beasts. His seventh year is the fatal one; and if he should happen then, to escape the misfortune that hangs over him, ah! do not wish him to live. His father, his very father, will not be able to escape from the hand of a parricide."

This answer threw the sultan into the deepest consternation. He did not sink, however, into absolute despondency; his courage soon revived. He determined to take all the precautions which paternal tenderness could suggest, to defeat the prediction of the astrologers. He, therefore, caused a kind of subterranean palace to be made on the summit of a lofty mountain. The labour and expense of the excavation was prodigious. Extensive walks were formed, with a variety of apartments, in which every

thing was provided that could contribute to the conveniences, and even the luxuries of life. In this magnificent cavern, Ibrahim, as it were, inhumed his son, together with his governess, of whose care, and fidelity he had no doubt. Provisions were constantly carried thither at stated periods. The king forgot not a single day to visit the mountain that contained his beloved treasure, and to be satisfied of his safety with his own eyes. With what delight did he behold the growing beauties of his son! With what pleasure and rapture did he listen to his sprightly saillies of wit, his smart repartees, and those pretty -nothings- which a father, in particular, is fond to recollect and to repeat; at which the most rigid gravity may smile, and which are worth all the understanding of riper years. He was perpetually counting the hours and minutes that he had to spend with his son; and he

incessantly reproached himself, for not seeing him more frequently.

Shah Abbas, for such was his name, at length reached his seventh year, that fatal year, which Ibrahim would fain have delayed, even at the expense of his crown. He would never leave his son a minute. But, alas! is it possible to escape our destiny? Summoned one day to his palace by affairs of the most pressing exigency, he left the mountain with extreme reluctance. Never had Shah Abbas appeared wore amiable in his father's eyes, never had Ibrahim appeared more affectionate to his son! Each was tormented by an uneasy sensation, an unaccountable presentiment that they were to meet there no more!

Some robbers were hunting wild beasts: the ardour of the pursuit brought them to this mountain. A lion that fled from them, perceived the subterraneous passage, and took refuge in it.

The robbers, who durst not follow him, waited, however, for the sequel of this adventure. On a sudden, they heard a violent scream, and presently all was silent. This silence suggested to them, that the cavern now contained, not a living creature, but the lion. They threw down a quantity of stones, which soon put an end to the existence of the formidable animal. They then descended into the cavern, securing themselves from all further danger from the lion by cutting off his head. Wandering through every part of this subterraneous palace, they were astonished at the prodigious riches which they beheld. They perceived a slaughtered woman: this was the prince's governess. By her side lay a child covered with blood, who shewed, however, some signs of life. They examined his wounds: they found not one of them dangerous. The captain of these banditti, after strip-

ping the cavern of its valuable contents, dressed the young prince's wounds himself, and effected a cure. The growing qualities of Shah Abbas endeared him to the chief, who adopted him as his son, and distinguished him as such by all the tenderness of a paternal heart.

Some years had elapsed since Ibrahim had first deplored the loss of a son, who, having been constantly ignorant of the name and titles of his father, had been unable to explain his origin to the robbers, was soon to become their chief. Such were the unaccountable caprices of fortune, which led to the completion of the prophecy, that had destined him to become one day a parricide. Ibrahim was wont to divert his grief by the pleasures of the chase; and this exercise soon became almost his only occupation. One evening that he had strayed, with a very slender escort, into the defiles of a very

solitary mountain, a troop of robbers rushed upon him. The combat for sometime was furious. An arrow pierced the king; it excited the spirit of vengeance in his attendants, and they fought, determined to conquer or die. They were soon victorious. The murderer was taken, and conducted to the metropolis, that he might undergo the punishment due to his crime.

Ibrahim, on the bed of death, summoned the astrologers to attend him, and thus addressed them: ”I was to have perished, you told me, by the hand of a son; but it is the hand of a robber that has inflicted the blow.”–”Sire,” answered the sages, ”forbear to seek an explanation. The robber”... They proceed no further. The young robber appears, and relates his history. Ibrahim, while he bowed in submission to God, and adored His inscrutable decrees, blessed Him also for having restored his son;

and the tears which he saw flow from the eyes of Shah Abbas, were a consolation in his dying moments.

APPLICATION OF ASTROLOGY TO THE PROLONGATION OF LIFE, &C.

Astrology was also made subservient to the means of prolonging human life; but how an art which determines the fate of mortals, and ascertains the impassable limits of the grave, could consistently be made subservient to such a purpose, we are rather at a loss to conceive, un-

less accounted for as follows. The teachers of divination maintained, that not only men, but all natural bodies, plants, animals, nay even whole countries, including every place and family, were under the government of some particular planet. As soon as the masters of the occult science had discovered by their tables, under what constellation the misfortune or distemper of any person originated, nothing farther was required, than that he should remove to a dwelling ruled by an opposite planet, and confine himself exclusively to such articles of food and drink as were under the influence of a different star. In this artificial manner they contrived to form a system, or peculiar classification of planets, namely, Lunar, Solar, Mercurial and the like–and hence arose a confused map of dictated rules, which, when considered with reference to the purposes of health, clean-

liness, exercise etc. form remarkable contrasts to those of the Greeks. But this preventive and repulsive method was not merely confined to persons who suffered under some bodily disorder: even individuals, who enjoyed a good state of health, if an unlucky constellation happened to forebode a severe disease, or any other misfortune, were directed to choose a place of residence influenced by a more friendly star–or to adopt such aliment only, as being under the auspices of a propitious star, might counteract the malignant influence of its antagonist.

It was also pretty generally believed and maintained, that a sort of intimate relation or sympathy subsisted between metals and plants: hence the names of the latter were given to the former, in order to denote this supposed connexion and affinity. The corresponding metals were melted into a common mass, under a certain

planet, and were formed into small medals, or coins, with the firm persuasion, that he who carried such a piece about his person, might confidently expect the whole favour and protection of the planet, thus represented.[78] Thus we perceive how easy the transition is from one degree of folly to another; and this may help to account for the shocking delusions practised in the manufacturing and wearing of metallic amulets of a peculiar mould, to which were attributed, by a sort of magic influence, the power and protection of the respective planet: these charms were thought to possess virtue sufficient to overrule the bad effects presaged by an unlucky hour of birth, to promote to places of honour and profit, and to be of potent efficacy in matters of commerce and matrimony. The German soldiers, in the dark and superstitious ages, believed that if the figure of Mars,

cast and engraved under the sign of the Scorpion, were worn about the neck, it would render them invulnerable, and insure success to their military enterprises–hence the reason why amulets were then found upon every soldier, either killed in battle or taken prisoner.

We shall so far conclude these observations on the chimera of astrology and medicine with the following remarks in the words of Chamber against Knight's work,[79] which defends this fanciful science, if science it may be called. "It demonstrates nothing while it defends every thing. It confutes, according to Knight's own ideas: it alleges a few scattered facts in favour of astrological productions, which may be picked up in that immensity of fabling which disgraces history. He strenuously denies, or ridicules, what the greatest writers have said of this fanciful art, while he lays great stress on

some passages from obscure authors, or what is worse, from authors of no authority."–The most pleasant part, however, is at the close where he defends the art from the objections of Mr. Chamber by recrimination. Chamber had enriched himself by medical practice, and when he charges the astrologers by merely aiming to gain a few beggarly pence, Sir Christopher catches fire, and shews by his quotations, that if we are to despise an art by its professors attempting to subsist, or for the objections which may be raised against its vital principles, we ought by this argument most heartily to despise the medical science, and medical men; he gives all here he can collect against physic and physicians, and from the confessions of Galen and Hippocrates, Avicenna and Agrippa, medicine is made to appear a vainer science than even astrology itself.

Lilly's opinions, and his pretended science, were such favourites of the age, that the learned Gataker[80] wrote professedly against this popular delusion. At the head of his star-expounding friends, Lilly not only formally replied to, but persecuted Gataker annually in his predictions, and even struck at his ghost, when beyond the grave. Gataker died in July 1654, and Lilly, having written in his almanack for that year, for the month of August, the following barbarous latin line–

Hoc in tumbo, jacet presbyter et nebulo! Here in this tomb lies a presbyter and a knave,

had the impudence to assert, that he had predicted Gataker's death! But the truth is, it was an empty epitaph to the "Lodgings to let:" it stood empty, reader, for the first passenger that the immortal ferryman should carry over the Styx.

But hear that arch imposter Old Patridge of more modern date whose -gulleries- appear to have no end. ”The practice of astrology is divided into speculative and theoretical.” (Astronomy and judicial astrology). The first teaches us how to know the stars and planets, and to find their places and motions. The second directs us to the knowledge of the influence and operations of the stars and planets upon sublunary bodies, and without this last the former is of little use. Astronomy cannot direct and inform us of the secret influences and operations of the stars and planets, without the assistance of' the -most sublime- art of astrology. For astronomy is conversant about the subject of this art, and doth furnish the astrologer with matter whereon to exercise his judgment, but astrology disposes this matter into predictions, or rational conjectures, as time and occasion

require.

"The practice again is subdivided into two parts, or quadripartite, as Ptolomy (lib. 2) declares: the first considers the general state of the world, and from eclipses and comets, great conjunctions, annual revolutions, quarterly ingressions and lunations, also the rising, culminating, and setting of the fixed stars, together with the configurations of the planets both to the sun and among themselves, judgment is deduced, and the astrologer doth frame his annual predictions of all sensitive and vegetative things lying in the air, earth, or water; of plague, plenty, dearth, mutations of the air, wars, peace, and other general accidents of countries, provinces, cities, etc.

"The second of these subdivided parts, in particular, respects only the private state of every single man and woman, which must be per-

formed from the scheme of the nativity, the knowledge of which is of most excellent use to all persons. Therefore let the nativities of children be diligently observed for the future, that is to say, the day, hour, and minute of birth as near as can be, which will be of use to the astrological physician, for the most principal conjecture of the malignity of the disease, whether it be curable, or shall end with death, depends upon the knowledge of the nativity; and very rarely any disease invades a person, but some unfortunate direction of the luminaries or ascendant to the body, or beams of malignant planets preceded the same, or did then operate, or at least some evil revolution, profection or transit, which cannot be discovered by any other way but by astrology. Moreover, it would be convenient that the true time of the first falling sick be observed precisely, and by that,

together with the nativity, be judiciously compared, the physician shall gain more credit than by all his other skill; and herein, the astrologer's foresight shall often contradict the judgment of the physician; for when the astrologer foretells a phlegmatic man, that at such a time he shall be afflicted with a choleric disease, the doctor will perceive by his physical symptoms, the astrologer, from his knowledge in more secret causes of nature, hath excelled him in his art.

"Now if God Almighty do not countermand or check the ordinary course of nature, or the matter of elementary bodies here below be not unproportionable, and thereby unapt to receive their impressions, there is no reason why, in a natural and physical necessity, astrological predictions should not succeed and take effect, and by how much the knowledge which we have by the known causes is more demonstrative and

infallible than that which we have either by signs or effects, so much by this companion doth Astrology appear worthy to be preferred before Physic." Cardan, who was an excellent physician saith: "If by the art of Astrology he had not better attained to the knowledge of his diseases, than the physician that would have administered to him by his skill, he had been assuredly cured by death, rather than preserved alive by physic. (Vide his Comment. upon Ptol. Quidrepart.) From hence it appears it is necessary that the physician should be skilful in astrology, but on the contrary, -ex quovis legno non fit Mercurius-, every astrologer cannot be a physician; if the nativity be but precisely known, or if, but -tempus ablatum- or -suppositum-, and withal some notable accidents of sickness, danger of drowning, peril by fire, marriage, or other, the like accidents may be foreseen."

The astrologers were a set of cunning, equivocal rogues; the more cautious of whom only uttered their prognostications in obscure and ambiguous language, which might be applied to all things, times, princes, and nations whatever. An almanack maker, a Spanish friar, predicted, in clear and precise words, the death of Henry the Fourth of France; and Pierese, though he had no faith in star-gazing, yet, alarmed at whatever menaced the life of a beloved sovereign, consulted with some of the king's friends, and had the Spanish almanack laid before his Majesty, who courteously thanked them for their solicitude, but utterly slighted the prediction: the event occurred, and in the following year, the Spanish -Lilly- spread his own fame in an new almanack. This prediction of the friar, was the result either of his being acquainted with the plot, or from his being made an instrument for

the purposes of those who were.

Cornelius Agrippa rightly designates astrologers ”a perverse and preposterous generation of men, who profess to know future things, but in the meantime are altogether ignorant of past and present; and undertaking to tell all people most obscure and hidden secrets abroad, at the same time, know not what happens in their own houses.”

But this Agrippa, for profound And solid lying, was renown’d: The Anthroposophus, and Floud, And Jacob Behmen, understood; Knew many an amulet and charm That would do neither good nor harm. He understood the speech of birds As well as they themselves do words; Could tell what subtlest parrots mean That speak and think contrary, clean; What member ’tis of whom they talk, Why they cry, rope and–walk, knave, walk. He could foretell whatever was By consequence to come to pass; As death of

great men, alterations, Diseases, battles, inundations: All this without th' eclipse o' th' sun, Or dreadful comet, he hath done By inward light, a way as good, And easy to be understood: But with more lucky hit than those That use to make the stars depose As if they were consenting to All mischief in the world men do: Or like the devil, did tempt and sway 'em To rogueries, and then betray 'em.

We shall conclude our astrological strictures with the following advertisement, which affords as fine a satirical specimen of quackery as is to be met with. It is extracted from "poor Robin's" almanack for 1773; and may not be without its use, to many at the present day. We will vouch for it being harmless, but as we are not in the secret of all that it contains, our readers must endeavour to get the information that may be wanted, on certain important points,

from other quarters. It will shew, however, that the almanack astrologers did not live upon the best terms, but like their predecessors, were constantly abusing and attacking each other.

ADVERTISEMENT.

”The best time to cut hair. How moles and dreams are to be interpreted. When most proper season to bleed. Under what aspect of the moon best to draw teeth, and cut corns. Pairing of nails, on what day unlucky. What the kindest sign to graft or inoculate in; to open bee-hives, and kill swine. How many hours boiling my Lady Kent’s pudding requires. With other notable questions, fully and faithfully resolved, by me Sylvester Patridge, student in physic and astrology, near the Gun in Moorfields.”

”Of whom likewise may be had, at reason-

able rates, trusses, antidotes, elixirs, love-powders. Washes for freckles, plumpers, glass-eyes, false calves and noses, ivory-jaws, and a new receipt to turn red hair into black."

Old Robin's almanack was evidently the best of the time, and free from all the astrological cant with which Patridge's Merlinus Liberatus was filled; against which Poor Robin did not a little declaim. The motto to his title runs thus:–

"We use no weather-wise predictions Nor any such-like airy fictions; But (which we think is much the best) Write the plain truth, or crack a jest: And (without any further pretence) Confess we write, and think of the pence: For that's the aim of all who write, Profit to gain, mixed with delight."

Poor old Robin attacked the astrologers of his day with no little vehemence: "How different a task is it," says he, "for man to behave

so in this world as to please all the people that inhabit it! A man who makes use of his best endeavours to please every body is sure to please but very few, and by that means displease a great many; which may very possibly be the case with poor Robin this year. But (be that as it will) -old Bob- is sometimes well pleased, when rogues, prick-eared coxcombs, fools, and such like, are the most displeased at him: be it therefore known, that it is only men of sense and integrity, (whether they have much money or no money) that he has any, (the least) regard for: I see very plainly, that an humble man is (generally) accounted -base-; if otherwise, he is esteemed -proud-; a bold look is looked upon as -impudence-; if modest, (then to be sure) he must be -hypocritical-; if his behaviour is grave, it is owing to a -sullenness- of temper; if affable, he is but -little- regarded; if strictly just, then

-cruel- must be his character; but, if merciful and forbearing, then (of consequence) a silly, sheepish-headed fool! Now, I challenge all the ASS-TROLOGERS and CONJURERS, throughout the whole kingdom, to demonstrate that all the whimsey-headed opinions which different men retain of different actions, together with their being so vastly different at different times, one from another; I say, I call upon them ALL to prove, that they are (wholly) owing to the STARRY influences! There being, (I believe) in general as many different ideas and conceptions in the mind of mankind, as there are variety of complexions and countenances."

His observations on the four -unequal- quarters of the year, as he terms them, are no less satirical, humorous, and full of truth, and so much in "opposition" with others of the trade, that poor old Robin, in good sense and trite re-

marks, carries away the palm from all his predecessors and contemporaries; indeed, he is so little of an astrologer, that, instead of consulting the angles, aspects, conjunctions and trines, of the planets, he is vulgar enough to attach more importance to the substantials and doings of this nether world. We present our readers with the following as a specimen, which, though in his usual way, a little rough-mouthed, occasionally is free from that almanack-cant which characterises the vocations of his fellow-labourers in the same field.

SPRING,

which, being the most delightful season in the whole year, as it comes the next after a long and cold winter makes it as welcome as it is delightful; for now the lengthening days afford full time for every body but drunkards and watchmen to finish their respective day's works by day-light, besides some time to spare to walk abroad, to see the fine new livery with which Dame Flora has now decked out Mother Earth. In the opening of the Spring, when all nature begins to recover herself, the same animal pleasure which makes the bird sing, and the whole

brute creation rejoice, rises very sensibly in the hearts of mankind. This quarter will bring whole shoals of mackerel, and plenty of green pease; likewise gooseberries, cherries, cheese-cakes, and custards.

But, let us now moralize,–and improve these vernal delights into real virtue; and, when we find within ourselves a secret satisfaction arising from the beauties of the creation, may we consider to whom we stand indebted for all these various gratifications and entertainments of sense; who it is that opens thus his hand, and fills the world with good! But so soon as this quarter is ended; i.e. there, or then, or thereabout, for in this case a day or two can break no great squares–I say this quarter (as usual) will be followed by the

SUMMER,

when, and at which time the days will have attained their greatest, and consequently the nights the shortest lengths. June, in which month this quarter is said to begin, will retain some likeness, if not exhibit the perfections of the Spring; but the two next succeeding months will perhaps have less vigour, but a greater degree of heat; for, as they pass on, they will be ripening the fruits of the earth; whilst the Dog star is shooting his rays amongst, the industrious farmer will have business enough upon his hands: for now he expects to be reap-

ing and gathering together the returns of his labour; but then he must expect, nevertheless, to bear the heat and burthen of the day.

This quarter very justly represents a man in the full vigour of health and strength; the beauty of the Spring is gone! The strength of Summer is of short continuance! It will very soon be succeeded by Autumn: thus, and thus (O reader) do then consider, hast thou seen the seasons, two, three, or four times return in regular succession: remember that the time is coming, when all opportunities of this sort will be for ever hid from thine eyes: remember if forty years have passed thee, I say, I would have thee remember, that thy spring is gone, thy summer almost spent! Have then, therefore, a very serious retrospective view of thy past, and, (if it please God) a fixed resolution to amend thy prolonged life: then being now arrived almost

on the eve of

AUTUMN

which begins this year (as usual) when, or then, or thereabouts, the time the Summer quarter ends–namely, when the nights begin to grow longer and the days shorter: this is the time when the barns are filled with wheat, which soon must be thrashed out, in order to be sowed again. This also is the time when the orchards abound with fruits of the kind, and consequently the properest time to make cider.

Lamentable now must be the case of those poor women who, in this quarter, happen to long for green pease or strawberries; for I dare

assure them, upon the -honest word- of an astrologer, that they can get none on this side of next Easter. Some now-abouts under the notion of soldiers, shall sally out at night upon -Pullen-, or perhaps lie in embuscade for a rope of onions, as if they were Welsh freebooters. Loss of time and money may be recovered by industry: but to be a fool-born, or a rogue in nature, are diseases incurable.

Remember that in any quarter of the year, this is almost always a certain presage of a wedding, when all parties are agreed, and the parson in readiness; and then you must be sure to have money in readiness too, or your intended marriage may happen to prove a miscarriage. But those who are able to pay for tying the knot, when it is fairly tied, may go home to dinner and be merry; go to the tavern and be merry; go to supper and be merry; rise next

morning and be merry: and let the world know, that a married life is a plentiful life, when people have good estates; a fruitful life when they have many children; and an happy life, when man and wife love each other as they ought to do, and never quarrel nor disagree.

OF THE WINTER QUARTER.

But now comes on the cold, dirty, dithering, pouting, rainy, shivering, freezing, blowing, stormy, blustering, cruel quarter called winter; the very thoughts of it are enough to fright one; but that it very luckily happens to be introduced (this year) by a good, fat merry Christmas: yet it is the last and worse, and very much resembles extreme old age accompanied by poverty; this quarter is also pretty much like Pharoah's lean kine; for it generally (we find) eats up and

devours most of the produce of the preceding seasons: now the sun entering the southern tropic, affords us the least share of his light, and consequently the longest long nights: yet, nevertheless, in this uncomfortable quarter, you may possibly pick up some crumbs of comfort, provided you have good health, good store of the ready Rhino, a good wife, and other good things about you: and especially a good conscience: for then the starry influences must necessarily appear very benign, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather; for in such cases there will be frequent -conjunctions- of sirloins and ribs of beef; -aspects- of legs and shoulders of mutton, with -refrenations- of loins of veal, shining near the watery triplicity of plumb-porridge–together with trine and sextile of minced pies; collared brawn from the Ursus major, and sturgeon from Pisces–all for the honour of Christ-

mas: and I think it is a much pleasanter sight than a Covent-Garden comedy, to see a dozen or two of husbandmen, farmers, and honest tenants, at a nobleman's table (who never raised their rents) worry a sirloin, and hew down, (I mean cut up) a goose like a log: while a good Cheshire cheese, and plenty of nappy ale, and strong March beer, washes down the merry goblets, sets all their wit afloat, and sends them to their respective homes, as happy as kings.

And now, kind loving readers, every one, God send y'a good new-year, when the old one 's gone.

FOOTNOTES:

[75] The following prediction, and the verification of it are of so recent a date, that we cannot resist giving it a place in our pages. In the account of the late Captain Flinder's voyage of discovery, is the melancholy relation of the loss of the master, Mr. Thistle, with seven others, in a boat, on the inhospitable shores of Terra Australia. To this narrative, the following note is subjoined, which we shall here quote in Captain Flinder's own words: "This evening, Mr. Fowler, the lieutenant, told me a circumstance which I thought very extraordinary, and

it afterwards proved to be more so. While we were lying at Spithead, Mr. Thistle was one day waiting on shore, and having nothing else to do, went to a certain old man, named Pine, to have his fortune told. The cunning man informed him that he was going on a long voyage, and that the ship, on arriving at her destination, would be joined by another vessel. That such was intended, he might have learnt privately; but he added that Mr. Thistle would be lost before the other vessel joined. As to the manner of his loss the magician refused to give any information. My boat's crew, hearing what Mr. Thistle said, went to consult the wise man, and after the prefatory information of a long voyage, they were told that they would be shipwrecked, but not in the ship they were going out in; whether they would escape and return to England, he was not permitted to reveal. This tale Mr. This-

tle often told at the mess-table; and I remarked, with some pain, in a future part of the voyage, that every time my boat's crew went to embark in the Lady Nelson, there was some degree of apprehension amongst them, that the time of the predicted shipwreck was arrived. I make no comment, (says Capt. Flinders,) upon this story, but to recommend a commander, if possible, to prevent any of his crew from consulting fortune-tellers."–It should be observed that, strange as it may appear, every particular of these predictions came exactly to pass, for the master and his boat's crew were lost before the Investigator was joined by the Lady Nelson, from Port-Jackson; and when the former ship was condemned, the people embarked with their commander on board the Porpoise, which was wrecked on a coral reef, and nine of the crew were lost.

[76] In 1670, the passion for horoscopes and expounding the stars, prevailed in France among the first rank. The new-born child was usually presented naked to the astrologer, who read the first lineaments in its forehead, and the transverse lines in its hands, and thence wrote down its future destiny. Catherine de Medicis carried Henry IV, when a child, to old Nostradamus, who antiquaries esteem more for his Chronicle of Provence than for his vaticinating powers. The sight of the revered seer, with a heard which "streamed like a meteor in the air," terrified the future hero, who dreaded a whipping from so grave a personage.

[77] The Chaldean Sages were nearly put to the route by a quarto pack of artillery, fired on them by Mr. John Chamber, in 1691. Apollo did not use Marsyas more inhumanly than his scourging pen this mystical race; and his per-

sonalities made them sorely feel it. However, a Norwich knight, the very Quixote of Astrology, arrayed in the enchanted armour of his occult authors, encountered this pagan in a most stately carousal. He came forth with "A Defence of Judicial Astrologye, in answer to a treatise lately published by Mr. John Chamber. By Christopher Knight. Printed at Cambridge, 1693."

[78] Vide Amulets passim.

[79] Lilly's work, a voluminous quarto monument of the folly of the age, was sold originally for four guineas; it is entitled "Christian Astrology," modestly treated, in three books, by William Lilly, student in Astrology, 2nd. edition 1659. Every page is embellished with a horoscope which, sitting on the pretending tripod, he explains with the utmost facility. There is also a portrait of this arch rogue and star-

gazer, an admirable illustration for Lavater. As to Lilly's great skill in prophecy, there goes a pleasant story related by a kinsman of Dr. Case, his successor–namely–that a person wanting to consult him on a certain point coming to his house one morning, Lilly himself going to the door, saw a piece of filthy carrion which some one, who had more wit than manners, had left there: and being much offended at its unsightly appearance wished heartily he did but know who had treated him in that manner by leaving such an unwelcome legacy, as it were, in his very teeth, that he might punish them accordingly; which his customer observing when the conjurer demanded his business, "Nothing at all," said he, "for I'm sure if you can't find out who has defiled your own door, it is impossible you should discover anything relating to me," and with this caustic remark he left him.

[80] The Reverend and learned Thomas Gataker, with whom Lilly was engaged in a dispute, in his Annotations on the tenth chapter of Jeremiah and 10th verse, called him a "blind buzzard," and Lilly reflected again on his antagonist in his -Annus Tenebrosus-. Mr. Gataker's reply was entitled Thomas Gataker, B.D. his Vindication of the annotation by him published upon these words, "thus saith the Lord," (Jer. x. 2) against the scurrilous aspersions of that grand impostor William Lilly; as also against the various expositions of two of his advocates Mr. John Swan, and another by him cited but not named. Together with the Annotations themselves, wherein the pretended grounds of judiciary astrology, and the scripture proofs produced to it, are discussed and refuted. London, 1653, in 4th part 192. Our author making animadversions on this piece in his English Merlin, 1654 produced

a third piece from Mr. Gataker, called a Discourse apologetical, wherein Lilly's lewd, and loud lies in his Merlin or Pasquil for 1654, are clearly laid open; his shameless desertion of his own cause further discovered, his abominable slanders fully refuted, and his malicious and -murtherous- mind, inciting to a general massacre of God's ministers, from his own pen, evidently known, etc. London 1654.

X. ONEIROCRITICAL PRESENTIMENT, ILLUSTRATING THE CAUSE, EFFECTS, PRINCIPAL PHENOMENA, AND DEFINITION OF DREAMS, ETC.

As we shall have to speak of the art practised through the medium, termed incubation, of curing diseases, it may be proper to say something previously on the interpretation of dreams through whose agency these events were said to be realized.

Oneirocritics, or interpreters of dreams, were called conjecturers, a very fit and proper name for these worldly wise men, according to the following lines, translated from Euripides–

He that conjectures least amiss Of all, the best of prophets is.

To the delusion of dreams not a few of the ancient philosophers lent themselves. Among these were Democritus, Aristotle, and his follower Themistius, Siresius the Platonic; who so far relied on dreams which some accident or other brought about, that they thence endeavoured to persuade men there are no dreams but what are founded on realities. For, say they, as the celestial influences produce various forms and changes in corporeal matter, so out of certain influences, predominating over the power of the fancy, the impression of visions is made, being consentaneous, through the disposition

of the heavens, to the effect produced; more especially in dreams, because the mind, being then at liberty from all corporeal cares and exercises, more freely receives the divine influences: it happens, therefore that many things are revealed to them that are asleep, which are concealed from them that are awake. With these and such reasons it is pretended that much is communicated through the medium of dreams:

When soft sleep the body lays at ease, And from the heavy mass the fancy frees, Whate'er it is in which we take delight, And think of most by day we dream at night.

The transition from sleep is very natural to that of dreams, the wonderful and mysterious phenomena of that state, the ideal transactions and vain illusions of the mind. According to Wolfius, an eminent philosopher of Silesia, every dream originates in some sensation, and

is continued by the succession of phantoms; but no phantasm can arise in the mind without some previous sensation. And yet it is not easy to confirm this by experience, it being often difficult to distinguish those slight sensations, which give rise to dreams, from phantasms, or objects of imagination.[81] The series of phantasms which thus constitute a dream, seems to be accounted for by the law of the imagination, or association of ideas; though it may be very difficult to assign the cause of every minute difference, not only in different subjects, but in the same, at different times, and in different circumstances. And hence M. Formey, who adopts the opinion of Wolfius, concludes, that those dreams are supernatural, which either do not begin by sensation, or are not continued by the law of imagination.[82]

The opinion is as old as Aristotle, who as-

serted, that a dream is only the [Greek: Phantasma] or -appearance- of things, excited in the mind, and remaining after the objects are removed.[83] The opinion of Lucretius, translated in our motto, was likewise that of Tully.[84] Locke also traces the origin of dreams to previous sensations. "The dreams of sleeping men," says this profound philosopher, "are all made up of the waking man's ideas, though for the most part oddly put together."[85] And Dr. Hartley, who explains all the phenomena of the imagination by his theory of vibrations and associations, says, that dreams are nothing but the imaginations or reveries of sleeping men, and that they are deducible from three causes–viz, the impressions and ideas lately received, and particularly those of the preceding day, the state of the body, more especially of the stomach and brain, and association.[86]

Macrobius mentions five sorts of dreams. 1st. vision–2nd. a discovery of something between sleeping and waking–3rd. a suggestion cast into our fancy, called by Cicero, -visum-,–4th. an ordinary dream–and fifth, a divine apparition or revelation in our sleep; such as were the dreams of the prophets, and of Joseph, as also of the Eastern Magi.

CAUSE OF DREAMS.

Avicen makes the cause of dreams to be an ultimate intelligence moving the moon in the midst of that light with which the fancies of men are illuminated while they sleep. Aristotle refers the cause of them to common sense, but placed in the fancy. Averroes, an Arabian physician, places it in the imagination; Democritus ascribes it to little images, or representations, separated from the things themselves; Plato among the specific and concrete notions of the soul; Albertus to the superior influences, which continually flow from the sky, through

many specific channels.

Some physicians attribute the cause of dreams to vapours and humours, and the affections and cares of persons predominant when awake; for, say they, by reason of the abundance of vapours, which are exhaled in consequence of immoderate feeding, the brain is so stuffed by it, that monsters and strange chimera are formed, of which the most inordinate eaters and drinkers furnish us with sufficient instances. Some dreams, they assert, are governed partly by the temperature of the body, and partly by the humour which mostly abounds in it; to which may be added the apprehensions which have preceded the day before; and which are often remarked in dogs, and other animals, which bark and make a noise in their sleep. Dreams, they observe, proceed from the humours and temperature of the body; we see the choleric dreams

of fire, combats, yellow colours, etc. the phlegmatic of water baths, of sailing on the sea; the melancholies of thick fumes, deserts, fantasies, hideous faces, etc. they that have the hinder part of their brain clogged, with viscous humours, called by physicians Ephialtes incubus, dream that they are suffocated. And those who have the orifice of their stomach loaded with malignant humours, are affrighted with strange visions, by reason of those venemous vapours that mount to the brain and distemper it.

POETICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF THE IMAGINATION IN DREAMS.

Were we to enter more profoundly into the mysterious phenomena of dreams, our present lucubrations might become too abstruse; and, after all, no philosophical nor satisfactory account

can be given of them. Such of our readers therefore, as may wish for a more minute inquiry into the opinions above stated, we beg leave to refer to the respective authors whom we have already quoted. The reader, who is fond to find amusement even in a serious subject, from the scenes of nocturnal imagination, will be glad, perhaps for a moment, to be transported into the regions of poetic fancy. And here we find that the fancy is not more sportive in dreams, than are the poets in their descriptions of her nocturnal vagaries. On the effects of the imagination in dreams, the following effusion, put into the mouth of the volatile Mercurio, is an admirable illustration:–

O, then I see, Queen Mab has been with you. She is the fancy's midwife, and she comes In shape no bigger than an agate stone On the fore-finger of an Alderman, Drawn with a team

of little atomies, Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep: Her waggon spokes made of long spinners' legs; The cover of the wings of grasshoppers; The traces of the smallest spider's web; The collars of the moonshine's watery beams; Her whip of cricket's bone; the lash of film; Her waggoner, a small grey coated gnat, Not half so big as a round little worm, Prickt from the lazy finger of a maid. Her chariot is an empty hazel nut, Made by the joiner squirril, old grub, Time out of mind the fairies' coachmakers: And in this state she gallops night by night, Thro' lovers' brains, and then they dream of love; On courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies strait; O'er lawyers' fingers, who strait dream on fees; O'er ladies lips, who strait on kisses dream, Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plague, Because their breath with sweetmeats tainted are. Sometimes she gallops o'er a lawyer's nose,

And then dreams he of smelling out a suit, And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig tail, Tickling the parson as he lies asleep; Then dreams he of another benefice; Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck And then he dreams of cutting foreign throats, Of breaches, ambuscades, Spanish blades, Of healths fire fathom deep; and then anon Drums in his ears, at which he starts and wakes, And being thus frighted, swears a pray'r or two, And sleeps again.

Lucretius, and Petronius in his poem on the vanity of dreams, had preceded our immortal bard in a description of the effects of dreams on different kinds of persons. Both the passages here alluded to, only serve to shew the vast superiority of Shakspeare's boundless genius: their sense is thus admirably expressed by Stepney:

At dead of night imperial reason sleeps, And

fancy with her train, her revels keeps; Then airy phantoms a mix'd scene display, Of what we heard, or saw, or wish'd by day; For memory those images retains Which passion form'd, and still the strongest reigns. Huntsmen renew the chase they lately run, And generals fight again their battles won. Spectres and fairies haunt the murderer's dreams; Grants and disgraces are the courtier's themes. The miser spies a thief, or a new hoard; The cit's a knight; the sycophant a lord, Thus fancy's in the wild distraction lost, With what we most abhor, or covet most. Honours and state before this phantom fall; For sleep, like death, its image, equals all.

Chaucer in his tale of the Cock and Fox, has a fine description, thus versified by Dryden:–

Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes: When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes;

Compounds a medley of disjointed things, A court of coblers and a mob of kings: Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad: Both are the reasonable soul run mad; And many monstrous forms in sleep we see, That neither were, or are, or e'er can be. Sometimes forgotten things, long cast behind, Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind. The nurse's legends are for truth received, And the man dreams but what the boy believed, Sometimes we but rehearse a former play, The night restores our actions done by day; As hounds in sleep will open for their prey. In short, the farce of dreams is of a piece In chimeras all; and more absurd or less.

Shakspeare again:–

I talk of dreams, Which are the children of an idle brain, Begot of nothing but vain phantasy, Which is as thin of substance as the air,

And more inconsistant than the wind.

Nor must Milton be omitted–

In the soul Are many lesser faculties, that serve Reason as chief; among these Fancy next Her office holds; of all external things, Which the five watchful senses represent, She forms imaginations, airy shapes, Which reason joining, or disjoining, frames, And all that we affirm, or what deny, or call Our knowledge or opinion; then retires Into her private cell, when nature rests. Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes, To imitate her; but misjoining shapes, Wild works produces oft, but most in dreams Ill matching words or deeds, long past or tale.

PRINCIPAL PHENOMENA IN DREAMING.

From these practical descriptions let us proceed to take a view of the principal phenomena in dreaming. And first, Mr. Locke's beautiful -modes of- which will greatly illustrate the preceding observations.

"When the mind," says Locke, "turns its view inward upon itself, and contemplates its own actions, -thinking- is the first that occurs. In

it the mind observes a great variety of modifications, and from thence receives distinct -ideas-. Thus the perception, which actually accompanies, and is annexed to any impression on the body, made by an external object, being distinct from all other modifications of thinking, furnishes the mind with a distinct idea which we call -sensation-; which is, as it were, the actual entrance of an idea into the understanding by the senses.

"The same idea, when it occurs again without the operation of the like object on the external sensory, is -remembrance-: if it be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavour found, and brought again in view, it is -recollection-: if it be held there long under consideration, it is -contemplation-; when ideas float in our mind without any reflexion or regard of the understanding, it is that which the French

call -reverie-;[87] our language has scarce a name for it. When the ideas that offer themselves (for as I have observed in another place, while we are awake, there will always be a train of ideas succeeding one another in our minds) are taken notice of, and, as it were, registered in the memory, it is -attention-; when the mind, with great earnestness, and of choice, fixes its view on any idea, considers it on all sides, and will not be called off by the ordinary solicitations of other ideas, it is what we call -intention- or -study-. Sleep without dreaming is rest from all these: and -dreaming- itself, is the having of ideas (while the outward senses are stopped, so that they receive not outward objects with their usual quickness) in the mind, not suggested by any external objects, or known occasion, nor under any choice or conduct of the understanding at all, and whether that which

we call -ecstasy-, be not dreaming with the eyes open, I leave to be examined."

Dr. Beattie, in his "Dissertations moral and critical," has an ingenious essay on this subject, in which he attempts to ascertain, not so much the -efficient- as the -final- causes of the phenomenon, and to obviate those superstitions in regard to it, which have sometimes troubled weak minds. He labours, with great earnestness, to shew, that dreams may be of use in the way of physical admonition: that persons, who attend to them with this view, may make important discoveries with regard to their health; that they may be serviceable as the means of moral improvement; that, by attending to them, we may discern our predominant passions, and receive good hints for the regulation of them; that they may have been intended by Providence to serve as an amusement to the mental pow-

ers; and that dreaming is not universal, because, probably, all constitutions do not require such intellectual amusement. In observations of this kind, we may discover the ingenuity of fancy and the sagacity of conjecture. We may find amusement in the arguments, but we look in vain for satisfaction. Nature, certainly, does nothing in vain, yet we are far from thinking, that man is able, in every case, to discover her intentions. Final causes, perhaps, ought never to be the subject of human speculation, but when they are plain and obvious. To substitute vain conjectures, instead of the designs of Providence, on subjects where those designs are beyond our reach, serves only to furnish matter for the cavils of the sceptical, and the sneers of the licentious.

Among the many striking phenomena in our dreams, it may be observed, that, while they

last, the memory seems to lie wholly torpid, and the understanding to be employed only about such objects as are then presented, without comparing the present with the past. When we sleep, we often converse with a friend who is either absent or dead, without remembering that the grave or the ocean is between us. We float, like a feather, upon the wind; for we find ourselves this moment in England, and the next in India, without reflecting that the laws of nature are suspended, or inquiring how the scene could have been so suddenly shifted before us. We are familiar with prodigies; we accommodate ourselves to every event, however romantic; and we not only reason, but act upon principles, which are in the highest degree absurd and extravagant. Our dreams, moreover, are so far from being the effect of a voluntary effort, that we neither know of what we shall dream,

or whether we shall dream at all.

But sleep is not the only time in which strange and unconnected objects involve our ideas in confusion. Besides the -reveries- of the day, already spoken of, we have, in a moral view, our -waking-dreams-, which are not less chimerical, and impossible to be realized, than the imaginations of the night.

Night visions may befriend—- Our waking dreams are fatal. How I dreamt Of things impossible (could sleep do more?) Of joys perpetual in perpetual change! Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave! Eternal sunshine in the storms of life! How richly were my noon-tide trances hung, With gorgeous tapestries of pictur'd joys! Till at deaths' toll,—- Starting I woke, and found myself undone.

Many of the fabulous stories of ghosts or apparitions have originated unquestionably in

dreams. There are times of slumber when we are sensible of being asleep. "When the thoughts are much troubled," says Hobbes, "and when a person sleeps without the circumstance of going to bed, or pulling off his clothes, as when he nods in his chair, it is very difficult to distinguish a dream from a reality. On the contrary, he that composes himself to sleep, in case of any uncouth or absurd fancy, easily suspects it to have been a dream."[88] On this principle, Hobbes has ingeniously accounted for the spectre which is said to have appeared to Brutus; and the well-known story told by Clarendon, of the apparition of the duke of Buckingham's father will admit of a similar solution. There was no man at that time in the kingdom so much the topic of conversation as the duke; and, from the corruptness of his character, he was very likely to fall a sacrifice to the corruptness of the

times. Sir George Villiers is said to have appeared to the man at midnight–there is therefore the greatest probability that the man was asleep; and the dream affrighting him, made a strong impression, and was likely to be repeated.

History furnishes us with numerous instances of a forecast having been communicated through the medium of dreams, some of which are so extraordinary as almost to shake our belief that the hand of Providence is not sometimes evident through their instrumentality. Cicero, in his first book on Divination, tells us, that Heraclides, a clever man, and who had been a disciple of Plato, writes that the mother of Phalaris saw in a dream the statues of the gods which she had consecrated in the house of her son; and among other things, it appeared to her, that from a cup which Mercury held in his hand,

he had spilled some blood from it, and that the blood had scarcely touched the ground, than rising up in large bubbles it filled the whole house. This dream of the mother was afterwards but too truly verified in the cruelty of the son. Cyrus dreamt that seeing the sun at his feet, he made three different unsuccessful attempts to lay his hand upon it, at each of which it evaded him. The Persian Magi who interpreted this dream told him that these three attempts to seize the sun signified that he would reign thirty years. This prediction was verified: he died at the age of seventy, having begun to reign when he was forty years old.

"There is doubtless," says Cicero, "something even among barbarians which marks that they possess the gift of presentiment and divination." The Indian Calanus mounting the flaming faggot on which he was about to be burnt, ex-

claimed ”O what a fine exit from life, when my body, like that of Hercules, shall be consumed by the fire, my spirit will freely enjoy the light.” And Alexander having asked if he had anything to say, he replied, ”Yes, I shall soon see you,” which happened as he foretold, Alexander having died a few days afterwards at Babylon. Xenophon, an ardent disciple of Socrates, relates that in the war which he made in favour of young Cyrus, he had some dreams which were followed by the most miraculous events. Shall we say that Xenophon does not speak truth, or is too extravagant? What! so great a personage, and so divine a spirit as Aristotle, can he be deceived? Or does he wish to deceive others, when he tells us of Eudemus of Cyprus, one of his friends, wishing to go into Macedonia, passed by Pheres, a celebrated town in Thessaly, which at that time was under the dominion of the tyrant Alexan-

der; and that having fallen very sick, he saw in a dream a very handsome young man, who told him that he would cure him, and that the tyrant Alexander would shortly die, but as to himself, he would return home at the end of five years. Aristotle remarks that the two first predictions were, indeed, soon accomplished; that Eudemus recovered, and that the tyrant was killed by his wife's brothers; but that at the expiration of five years, the time at which it was hoped Eudemus, according to the dream, was to return to Sicily, his native country, news were received that he had been killed in a combat near Syracuse; which gave rise to another interpretation of the dream, namely, that, when the spirit or soul of Eudemus left his body, it went thence straight to his own house.–A cup of massy gold having been stolen from the temple of Hercules, this god appeared in a dream to

Sophocles three consecutive times, and pointed out the thief to him; who was put to the torture, confessed the delinquency, and gave up the cup. The temple afterwards received the name of Hercules Indicator.

An endless variety of similar instances, both from ancient and modern history, might be adduced of the singularity of dreams, as well as their instrumentality in revealing secrets which, without such agency, had lain for ever in oblivion; these, however, are sufficient for our purpose here; and the occurrence of one of a very recent date, connected with the discovery of the body of the murdered Maria Martin, in the red barn, is still fresh in the recollection of our readers. That there is a ridiculous infatuation attached by some people to dreams, which have no meaning, and which are the offsprings of the day's thoughts, even among persons whose ed-

ucation should inform them better, particularly among the fair sex, cannot be denied; indeed, a conversation seldom passes among them, but some inconsistent dream or other, form a leading feature of their gossip; and doubtless is with them an hysterical symptom.

Sometimes in our sleeping dreams, we imagine ourselves involved in inextricable woe, and enjoy at waking, the ecstasy of a deliverance from it. "And such a deliverance," says Dr. Beattie, "will every good man meet with at last, when he is taken away from the evils of life, and awakes in the regions of everlasting light and peace; looking back upon the world and its troubles, with a surprise and satisfaction similar in kind (though far higher in degree) to that which we now feel, when we escape from a terrifying dream, and open our eyes to the sweet serenity of a summer morning." Sometimes, in our dreams,

we imagine scenes of pure and unutterable joy; and how much do we regret at waking, that the heavenly vision is no more! But what must the raptures of the good man be, when he enters the regions of immortality, and beholds the radiant fields of permanent delight! The idea of such a happy death, such a sweet transition, from the dreams of earth to the realities of heaven, is thus beautifully described by Dryden, in his poem entitled Eleonora:

”She passed serenely, with a single breath; This moment perfect health, the next was death; One sigh did her eternal bliss assure; So little penance needs when souls are pure. As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue; Or, one dream past, we slide into a new; So close they follow and such wild order keep, We think ourselves awake and are asleep; So softly death succeeded life in her: She did but dream of

heaven and she was there."

DEFINITION OF DREAMS.

Dreams are vagaries of the imagination, and in most instances proceed from external sensations. They take place only when our sleep is unsound, in which case the brain and nervous system are capable of performing certain motions. We seldom dream during the first hours of sleep; perhaps because the nervous fluid is then too much exhausted; but dreams mostly occur towards the morning, when this fluid has been, in some measure, restored.

Every thing capable of interrupting the tranquillity of mind and body, may produce dreams; such are the various kinds of grief and sorrow, exertions of the mind, affections and passions, crude and undigested food, a hard and inconvenient posture of the body. Those ideas which have lately occupied our minds or made a lively impression upon us, generally constitute the principal subject of a dream, and more or less employ our imagination, when we are asleep.

Animals are likewise apt to dream, though seldom; and even men living temperately, and enjoying a perfect state of health, are seldom disturbed with this play of the fancy. And, indeed, there are examples of lively and spirited persons who never dream at all. The great physiologist Haller considers dreaming as a symptom of disease, or as a stimulating cause, by which the perfect tranquillity of the sensorium

is interrupted. Hence, that sleep is the most refreshing, which is undisturbed by dreams, or, at least, when we have the distinct recollection of them. Most of our dreams are then nothing more than sports of the fancy, and derive their origin chiefly from external impressions; almost every thing we see and hear, when awake, leads our imagination to collateral notions or representations, which, in a manner, spontaneously, and without the least effort, associate with external sensations. The place where a person whom we love formerly resided, a dress similar to that which we have seen her wear, or the objects that employed her attention, no sooner catch our eye, than she immediately occupies our mind. And, though these images associating with external sensations, do not arrive at complete consciousness within the power of imagination, yet even in their latent state they

may become very strong and permanent.

Cicero furnishes us with a story of two Arcadians, who, travelling together, arrived at Megara, a city of Greece, between Athens and Corinth, where one of them lodged in a friend's house, and the other at an inn. After supper, the person who lodged at the private house went to bed, and falling asleep, dreamed that his friend at the inn appeared to him and begged his assistance, because the innkeeper was going to kill him. The man immediately got out of bed much frightened at the dream; but recovering himself, and falling asleep again, his friend appeared to him a second time, and desired that, as he would not assist him in time, he would take care at least not to let his death go unpunished; that the innkeeper having murdered him had thrown his body into a cart and covered it with dung; he therefore begged that he would

be at the city gate in the morning, before the cart was out; struck with this new dream, he went early to the gate, saw the cart, and asked the driver what was in it; the driver immediately fled, the dead body was taken out of the cart, and the innkeeper apprehended and executed.

It is very frequently observed, that in a dream a series of representations is suddenly interrupted, and another series of a very different kind occupies its place. This happens as soon as an idea associates itself; which, from whatever cause, is more interesting than that immediately preceding. The last then becomes the prevailing one, and determines the association. Yet, by this too, the imagination is frequently reconducted to the former series. The interruption in the course of the preceding occurrences is remarked, and the power of abstracting similarities is in search of the cause of this irregu-

larity. Hence, in such cases, there usually happens some unfortunate event or other, which occasions the interruption of the story. The representing power may again suddenly conduct us to another series of ideas, and thus the imagination may be led by the subreasoning power before defined, from one scene to another. Of this kind, for instance, is the following remarkable dream, as related and explained in the works of professor Maas of Halle: ”I dreamed once,” says he ”that the Pope visited me. He commanded me to open my desk, and carefully examined all the papers it contained. While he was thus employed, a very sparkling diamond fell out of his triple crown into my desk, of which, however, neither of us took any notice. As soon as the Pope had withdrawn, I retired to bed, but was soon obliged to rise, on account of a thick smoke, the cause of

which I had yet to learn. Upon examination I discovered, that the diamond had set fire to the papers in my desk, and burnt them to ashes.”

On account of the peculiar circumstances by which this dream was occasioned, it deserves the following short analysis. ”On the preceding evening,” says professor Maas, ”I was visited by a friend with whom I had a lively conversation, upon Joseph IInd’s suppression of monasteries and convents. With this idea, though I did not become conscious of it in my dream, was associated the visit which the Pope publicly paid the Emperor Joseph at Vienna, in consequence of the measures taken against the clergy; and with this again was combined, however faintly, the representation of the visit, which had been paid me by my friend. These two events were, by the subreasoning faculty, compounded into one, according to the established rule–that things

which agree in their parts, also correspond as to the whole;–hence the Pope's visit, was changed into a visit made to me. The subreasoning faculty then, in order to account for this extraordinary visit, fixed upon that which was the most important object in my room, namely, the desk, or rather the papers contained in it. That a diamond fell out of the triple crown was a collateral association, which was owing merely to the representation of the desk. Some days before when opening the desk, I had broken the glass of my watch, which I held in my hand, and the fragments fell among the papers. Hence no farther attention was paid to the diamond, being a representation of a collateral series of things. But afterwards the representation of the sparkling stones was again excited, and became the prevailing idea; hence it determined the succeeding association. On account of its

similarity, it excited, the representation of fire, with which it was confounded; hence arose fire and smoke.–But, in the event, the writings only were burnt, not the desk itself; to which, being of comparatively less value, the attention was not at all directed." It is farther observable, that there are in the human mind certain obscure representations, and that it is necessary to be convinced of the reality of these images, if we are desirous of perceiving the connexion, which subsists among the operations of the imagination. Of the numerous phenomena, founded on obscure ideas, and which consequently prove their existence, we shall only remark the following. It is a well known fact, that many dreams originate in the impressions made in the body during sleep; and they consist of analogous images or such as are associated with sensations that would arise from these impressions, dur-

ing a waking state. Hence, for instance, if our legs are placed in a perpendicular posture, we are often terrified by a dream that implies the imminent danger of falling from a steep rock or precipice. The mind must represent to itself these external impressions in a lively manner, otherwise no ideal picture could be thus excited; but, as we do not become at all conscious of them, they are but faintly and obscurely represented.

If we make a resolution to rise earlier in the morning than usual; and if we impress the determination on our mind, immediately before going to rest, we are almost certain to succeed. Now it is self-evident that this success cannot be ascribed to the efforts of the body, but altogether to the mind, which probably, during sleep perceives and computes the duration of time, so that it makes an impression on the

body, which enables us to awake at an appointed hour. Yet all this takes place, without our consciousness, and the representations remain obscure. Many productions of art are so complicated, that a variety of simple conceptions are requisite to lay the foundation of them; yet the artist is almost entirely unconscious of these individual notions. Thus a person performs a piece of music, without being obliged to reflect, in a conscious manner, on the signification of the notes, their value, and the order of the fingers he must observe; nay even without clearly distinguishing the strings of the harp, or the keys of the harpsichord. We cannot attribute this to the mechanism of the body, which might gradually accustom itself to the accurate placing of the fingers. This could be applied only where we place a piece of music, frequently practised; but it is totally inapplicable to a new piece,

which is played by the professor with equal facility, though he has never seen it before. In the latter case there must arise, necessarily, an ideal representation, or an act of judgment, previous to every motion of the finger.

These arguments, we trust, are sufficient, to evince the occurrence of these obscure notions and representations, from which all our dreams originate. Before, however, we close this subject, we shall relate the following extraordinary dream of the celebrated Galileo, who at a very advanced age had lost his sight. In one of his walks over a beautiful plain, conducted by his pupil Troicelli, the venerable sage related the following dream to him. "Once," said he, "my eyes permitted me to enjoy the charms of these fields. But now, since their light is extinguished, these pleasures are lost to me for ever. Heaven justly inflicts the punishment which was pre-

dicted to me many years ago. When in prison, and impatiently languishing for liberty, I began to be discontented with the ways of Providence; Copernicus appeared to me in a dream; his celestial spirit conducted me over luminous stars, and, in a threatening voice, reprehended me for having murmured against him, at whose -fiat- all these worlds had proceeded from nothing. 'A time shall come (said he) when thine eyes shall refuse to assist thee in contemplating these wonders.'"

We shall now proceed to notice the subject of dreams in another point of view–that is, as being employed as a medium of divination in the cure of diseases, in which the fancies of the brain appear, in reality, to as little advantage as they do with reference to any other considerations in which such pretended omens exist.

FOOTNOTES:

[81] Wolfius, Psychol. Empir. Sect. 123.

[82] Mem. de l'acad. de Berlin, tom. ii. p. 316.

[83] Arist. de insomn. cap 3.

[84] Quae in vita usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, vident quaeque agunt vigilantes, agitantque, ea cuique in somno accidunt. -De Div.-

[85] Essay on Human Understanding, book, chap. i. sect 17.

[86] Obs, on Man, vol. 1, sect. 5.

[87] There is a phenomenon in the mind,

which, though it happen to us while we are perfectly awake, yet approaches the nearest to sleep of any I know. It is called the -Reverie-, or, as some term it, the -brown study-, a sort of middle state between waking and sleeping; in which, though our eyes are open, our senses seem to be entirely shut up, and we are quite insensible of every thing about us, yet we are all the while engaged in a musing indolence of thought, or a supine and lolling kind of roving from one fairy scene to another, without any self-command; from which, if any noise or accident rouse us, we wake as from a real dream, and are often as much at a loss to tell how our thoughts were employed, as if we had waked from the soundest sleep. This is frequently called -dreaming-, sometimes -absence-, a thing often observed in lovers and people of a melancholy or indeed speculative turn.—

Fordyce's Dialogues concerning education, vol. II. p. 255.-

[88] Leviathan, part. 1. c. 1.

XI. ON INCUBATION; OR THE ART OF HEALING BY VISIONARY DIVINATION.

Medicine unquestionably ranks among the most ancient of all human sciences. In the infant state of society, when simplicity of manners characterised the pursuits of mankind, medical assistance was little wanted; but when the nature of man degenerated, and vice and luxury corrupted his habits of innocence and temperance, diseases sprung up which those aids alone could check or eradicate. The knowledge of them at first could not fail to be empirical and precarious. The sick were placed in the high ways, that travellers and passers by might assist them with their counsel; and at length the priesthood appropriated this privilege ex-

clusively to themselves.

It was not merely the sacerdotal dignity which rendered them objects of awe and reverence to the illiterate multitude; the priests were regarded as the depositaries of science and learning; and proved themselves as skilful as they were successful, in cementing their influence by those arts which were best calculated to inflame the prejudices of the vulgar in their favour.

It is the work of ages to wean men and nations from popular illusions, and the deep-rooted opinions transmitted from sire to son: it cannot therefore surprise us, that even when the intellectual energy of Greece was signalizing itself by efforts which have commanded the admiration of after ages, it should still remain a popular dogma in medicine ”that persons labouring under bodily infirmity, might be thrown into a state of charmed torpor, in which, though

destitute of any previous medical knowledge, they would be enabled to ascertain the nature of their malady, as well as of the diseases of others, and devise the means of their cure.” Upon this dogma was founded the mystery of incubations, or the art of healing by visionary divination.

It is not our object here to discuss whether a man can be capable of divination: such a power, however, was assigned to him, not only by the vulgar, but by the greater number of the philosophical sects of antiquity; and it does appear to savour a little of temerity, that Epicurus and the cynics should have ventured to reject a belief so universally and strenuously maintained, and resting on an infinity of traditions and accounts of prophets, in whom Greece had abounded from her earliest times, and of whose divine gift of prophecy the firmest conviction

was currently entertained. Aeschylus, Plutarch, Apuleius, and other Greek authors, bear ample testimony of this persuasion, and tell us that by uncommon and irregular motions of the body intoxicating vapours, or certain holy ejaculations, men might be thrown into an enchanted trance; in which, being in a state between sleeping and waking, they were unsusceptible of external impressions and obtaining a glimpse of futurity, were gifted with the power of prophecy. Here their allusion, however, only concerns the celebrated divinations of the Pythia.[89] We must therefore, probe somewhat deeper, in order to illustrate that species of divination which was the result of dreams, and a source of divination on the nature of diseases and their remedies.

This kind of superstition was in no less acceptation than the former among the ancients, whose temples were constantly crowded with

the sick, and reverberated with their supplications for divinatory dreams, which were regarded as an immediate gift from the gods. Indeed, the celestial origin of dreams was universally admitted by the nations of antiquity, and thence also their efficacy as oracles. Nothing could be more natural than such an idea. From the crude and imperfect notions which long prevailed with respect to the soul, it was scarcely possible for them to ascribe the impressions, which their memory retained of the creation of their fancy during their slumbers, to the instrumentality of their own conceits; they could not fail therefore to impute them to the interposition of some foreign agent, and to whom more naturally could they refer them than to a divinity? When awake, they imagined themselves always attended by the gods in person, and ascribed every thought, and resolved every

appearance or accident, which deviated from the common course of nature, to the immediate influence of a superintending deity. It was under such impressions that so many nations originally rested their belief in divinatory dreams. The records of antiquity therefore abound in instances (for the greater part of an early date) where the actions of men have been the result of a dream, whose conceit was entirely at variance with the real state of their affairs. It was not long before the diversity of dreams awakened their attention: some were connected and simple, others were obscure, and made up of curious fancies, though not incapable of being resolved by the windings and turnings of allegory.

It was no unnatural transition from the received belief in dreams, to the idea that they might become the medium of seeking instruc-

tion from the gods: hence the institution of oracles, whose responses were given in dreams; and the addition of sleeping chambers to many temples, such as those in Epidaurus and at Oropos. Here it was, that after pious ceremonies and prayers, men laid themselves down in expectation of dreams; when the expectation was realized, though the dream proved ever so confused or intricate, the dreamer always succeeded in reconciling it to his circumstances: his own belief and priestly wiles, readily effected the solution. The conceit of dreams, according to the votary's wishes, was so powerfully promoted by the preparatory initiation he had undergone, that it would have been somewhat extraordinary had he been altogether disappointed. He was generally anxious to increase the fame of his divinity by his dream, and possessed a high veneration and deep impression of the miracles

which that divinity had wrought. With these predispositions he resorted to the temple, where he had a whole day before him to ponder on his malady, and on every sort of remedy that might have been suggested to him; how natural was it, therefore, for his busy imagination to fix, in his sleep, upon one particular remedy more forcibly than upon another? Add to this, the solemn lonely hour of night was the appointed hour for his sleep, which was preceded by prayer and other inspiring ceremonies, that would naturally elevate his devotion to the highest pitch. He had also previously perambulated the temple, and with a full heart surveyed the offerings of those whose sickness had departed from them.

If all these preparations were unavailing, the officiants of the temple had still means in reserve, by which the credulous should be thrown

into that bodily state which was indispensable to the divinatory sleep: of these, succeeding instances will be hereafter produced. In those days, there were however, some men from whom the somniferous faculty was withheld: they were, therefore, admonished to repeat their prayers and oblations, in order to win the divinity's favour: and the ultimate and customary resort was, if success did not crown his perseverance, to pronounce it a token, that such patients were an eyesore to the divinity.

From this divinatory sleep, arose the vulgar expressions in Greece [Greek: enkoimasdai], and [Greek: enkoimaesis][90] The latin terms are -incubare- and -incubatio- an exact translation of the Greek words. It appears, therefore, that the Romans and Greeks were equally acquainted with the institution; though we find but very little mention made of it by the Latin

writers, yet this is no argument against its prevalence among the Romans, as we are left with as scanty accounts of many other superstitions which were in vogue amongst them. It is highly probable that it was not by any means so popular in Rome as in Greece; and the cause of this may, perhaps, be found in the reflecting disposition and sober character of the haughty Roman, to which the light and volatile temperament of the Grecian, formed so striking a contrast.

That incubation was a ready means of diving into the future, needs no demonstration. Although its practice was chiefly resorted to in cases where medical aid was desired, it was still made use of in every other case, in which the ancient oracles were consulted. Whether it arose in Greece, or migrated thither from the East, is a point with which the ancients have

left us unacquainted, though they advert to its prevalence amongst those who were called barbarians. Strabo has several instances of it, and particularly mentions a place in the Caspian sea, where such an oracle existed;[91] he also relates, in his celebrated account of Moses, that this law-giver laid it down, in common with the priests of Esculapius, that to those who led a chaste and virtuous life the deity would vouchsafe prophetical visions in his sanctuary; but to those who were of idle and impure habits, they would be denied.[92]

Pomponius Mela even mentions a savage nation, in the interior of Africa, who laid themselves down to sleep on the grave-stones of their ancestors, and looked upon the dreams they had on those spots as oracles from the dead.[93] We shall see, hereafter, that this superstition was equally indigenous among the Egyptians.

Although it be doubtful whether the Greeks owed this species of divination to their own invention or not, its existence may at least be traced as far as the earliest ages of their history; notwithstanding no positive mention of it has been made either by Homer or the authors following him.

The oracular power of dreams, and the sanctuaries where they are supposed to be dispersed, have been diffusely treated of in the compilations of Van Dale and other learned writers. These species of oracles were in high estimation, even in the most enlightened and flourishing periods of Greece; it is somewhat singular, however, that no people cherished them more devoutly than the Spartans, who depended altogether upon oracles in their weightiest affairs of state. Of all the civilized nations of Greece, Sparta always approved herself the most superstitious; her advancement was rather the ef-

fect of her policy, than of any stimulus given to her civilization by science. This consideration will enable us to account for the powerful influence which, even in the latest stages of Lacedemonian story, attached to the responses of Passiphae, a local goddess of Thalame, but little known beyond the confines of Laconia. The extent of their influence is particularly evident in the history of Agis and Cleomenes.[94]

The greater part of these somnambulistic oracles were ascribed to persons who had distinguished themselves as great dreamers when on earth. In old times there was a description of prophets who pretended to prepare themselves for the foreboding of future events through the medium of sacred dreams. They were classed under the appellation of [Greek: Oneiroploi], to which rank the most celebrated Vates of the heroic age belonged. In this way it was that a

sacred spot was dedicated to Calchus, whence he gave his responses in dreams after his decease: this spot lay in Daunia, on the coast of the Adriatic. The supplicant's offices began with the offering up of a ram, on whose skin he laid himself down, and in this situation, received the instruction he sought for.[95] Amphilocus, a contemporary soothsayer, who accompanied the Epigoni in the first Theban war, had a similar oracle at Mallos, in Cilicia, which Pausanias asserts, even at the close of the second century, to have been the most credible of his age; it is also mentioned by Dion Cassius, in his history of Commodus.[96]

The most famous, however, of this class of oracles, was that of Amphiaraus, the father of Amphilocus, which was one of the five principal oracles of Greece; he had signalized himself as a sapient soothsayer in the first Theban

war; and his oracle was situated at Oropos, on the borders of Boetia and Attica. Of all others this deserves our most particular attention, as it was resorted to more frequently in cases of infirmity and disease, than in any other circumstances. His responses were always delivered in dreams, in whose interpretation, as he was the first to possess that faculty. Pausanias says he received divine honours. Those who repaired to Amphiaraus's oracle to supplicate his aid, laid themselves down in the manner we have just related, after several preparatory lustrations and sacrifices, on the skin of a ram slain in honour of the god, and awaited the dreams, which were to unfold the means of their different cures.

Lustrations and sacrifices were not, however, the only preparatives for inducing the visionary disposition. The priests subjected the pa-

tients to various others, which Philostratus affirms[97] to have been very instrumental towards rendering the sleeper's mind clear and unclouded. Part of these preparatives consisted in one day's abstinence from eating, and three, nay, even in some cases, fifteen days' abstinence from wine, the common beverage of the Greeks. This was the practice also with other oracles; nor were the priests in the meantime insensible to their own interests on these occasions; for those who were cured by Amphiaraus's revelations were permitted to bathe in the sacred waters of a fountain, into which they were enjoined to cast pieces of gold and silver, which were destined, most probably, to sweeten the labours of his officiants.

The oracles, whose intervention was principally or altogether sought for the healing of the sick by means of divination founded on dreams,

were scattered over Greece, Italy, Egypt, and other countries. As regards those of Egypt, it may be remarked, that although many of the Egyptians believed there were thirty-six demons, or aerial deities, each of whom had the care of a certain portion of the human frame, and when that portion was diseased, would heal it on the patient's earnest prayer, yet a variety of their oracles, such as those of Serapis, Isis, and Phthas, the Hephaestos of the Greeks, appertained to the class, which is the present object of our inquiry.

The oracle Serapis was situated near Canopus; it was visited with the highest veneration by the wealthiest and most illustrious Egyptians, and contained ample records of miraculous cures which that god had performed on sleepers.[98] Isis, it is said, effected similar cures in her lifetime, whence it became her office, in

her after state of deification, to reveal in dreams the most efficacious remedies to the sick. Indeed the healing powers of this goddess were such, that, as we are told by Diodorus,[99] the remedies she prescribed never failed of their effect, and that convalescents were daily seen returning from her temple, many of whom had been abandoned as incurable by the physicians.

The third oracle of the sick was consecrated to Phthas, and lay near Memphis, but it is seldom mentioned by the ancients.[100]

In Italy there existed two oracles, whose responses were imparted in dreams, before the worship of Esculapius was introduced from Greece. One of them only belongs to this place, that of the physician Podalirus, in Daunia,[101] which is mentioned by Lycophron.[102] Subsequently it is well known incubation was practised after the Grecian form in the Roman temple of Aes-

culapius on the Insula Tiberina.[103]

This description of oracles abounded throughout Greece; the most memorable of which was that on the Asiatic coast, between Trattis and Nyssa, which is more particularly described by Strabo than any other. Not far from the town of Nyssa, says he, there is a place called Charaka, where we find a grove and temple sacred to Pluto and Proserpine, and close to the grove a subterraneous cave, of a most extraordinary nature. It is related of it, that diseased persons, who have faith in the remedies predicted by those deities, are accustomed to resort to it and pass some time with experienced priests, who reside near the cave. These priests lay themselves down to sleep in the cave, and afterwards order such medicine as have been revealed to them there, to be furnished to their patients in the temple. They frequently conduct the sick

themselves into the cave, where they remain for several days together, without touching a morsel of food; nor are the profane withheld from a participation in the -divinatory- sleep, though this is not permitted otherwise than under the controul, and with the sacred sanction, of the priests. There is, however, nothing more surprising about this place than that it is esteemed -noxious and fatal to the healthy-.[104] This last remark of our geographer, proves how jealous the priestly physicians were of their medical monopoly, and how fearful lest the -saner- part of mankind should detect and expose the pretended virtues of their medical sanctuary.

We have hitherto mentioned the name of Aesculapius but casually, though there was no god of antiquity more celebrated for curing every species of malady by the incubatory process. He was particularly designated by the Greeks

as "the sender of dreams," [Greek: Oneiropompon]; nor could any other deity boast of so great a number of those oracles. The most distinguished of these was the oracle of Epidaurus, in the Argivian territory; from which spot his worship extended over a great proportion of the old world;–hither, as being the place of his birth and the site of his richest temple, crowds of sick persons constantly repaired in quest of dreams. The success attending them was diligently set forth on every wall of the temple; where the -tabulae votivae- recorded the names of those who had been healed, the nature of their maladies, and the cure which the god prescribed. Similar circumstances are related of his Temple at Triccae, in Thessaly, where Esculapius was held in great veneration at a very early period; there appears also to have been another such temple either at or near Athens,[105] where we

must look for the scene of the ridiculous cure which Aristophanes makes Aesculapius to perform on the blind god of riches. Though there is undoubtedly a rich vein of the burlesque in the Plutus of the Grecian dramatist, yet we may gather much concerning our present subject from the scene in which the slave, who had attended Plutus in the Temple, relates the whole process of his master's wife. Here also the night was the chosen period of incubation. Before the signal for sleep was given, the officiants of the temple extinguished all the lights in the sick men's chamber; thus involving them in a solemn stillness and obscurity highly favourable to the work in hand, but in a particular manner to the subterfuge of the priests, who enacted the nocturnal apparition of Aesculapius to his sick client.

This passage in Plutus is certainly the ear-

liest circumstantial relation we possess of the practice of this species of incubation.[106] The license permitted to Grecian comedy was such as to authorise the ridicule and contempt of the most popular deities; we are not, therefore to conclude from the scenes that there were many unbelievers, or that this ancient system of cure had sunk into disrepute: for the history of our comedian's great contemporary, Hippocrates, informs us, that at this very time the temple of Aesculapius at Cos abounded in tablets, on which the sick attested the remedies that had been revealed to them during incubation, and that he himself was highly indebted to them for much of his medical knowledge.

Were it not authenticated by the most undeniable testimonies, it would appear incredible that the impostures of the disciples of Aesculapius, and the common faith in his regener-

ative powers, should have survived with equal potency and acceptation during the ages immediately succeeding the Christian era. It must not however, be forgotten, that these were the times also, when an infinity of superstitious of every description disgraced the Roman world; although it would have appeared a necessary consequence, that their prevalency should have been checked by the increasing determination of learning and science.

If at this period the number of dreaming patients had fallen off at Cos and Epidaurus, the deficiency was amply compensated by the growing popularity of Aesculapius's shrines at Rome, Pergamus, Alaea, Mallos, and other places, where the ancient rituals were faithfully preserved. The highest magistrates in the Roman states not only countenanced, but patronised the superstition; Marcus Aurelius, by the friendship with

which he honoured the Paphlagonian imposter Alexander, and Caracalla, by the journey he undertook to Pergamus, to obtain the cure of a disease which inflicted him. This Alexander, the Cagliostro of his age, whose memoirs have been handed down to us by Lucian, made shift to father a new species of juggling upon the ancient process of incubation: for he pretends that it was necessary for him to sleep for a night in the sealed scrips which contain the queries he was to have resolved for those who visited his oracle.[107] During this interval he dexterously opened the scrips, and sealed them up again; pretending that the responses which he delivered to the querists in the morning, had been revealed to him by the deity in a dream.

The priests of Aesculapius possessed a never failing source of information on the recipes or votive tablets with which these temples abounded.

These were sometimes engraven on pillars, as at Epidaurus; of which Pausanias says there were six remaining in his time, and besides these, one in particular removed from the rest, on which it was recorded that Hippolytus had sacrificed twenty horses, in return for his having been restored to life by him. Five memorials only of this kind have reached the present age. One of them is to be found in the beginning of Galen's fifth book de Compos, medic.: it is taken from the temple of Phthas, near Memphis, and is the least interesting of the whole. Its subject is the use of the Diktamnus, borrowed from Heras of Cappadocia, a medical writer, frequently quoted by Galen. The remaining four are much more important: they were engraven on a marble slab,[108] of later date at Rome, and are thought, with much probability, to have belonged to the Aesculapian temple in the Insula Tiberina. The

present translation, in which some errors either of the artist or copyist are rectified, is extracted from the first volume of Gruter's Corp. Inscriptionum. The narrations are perspicuous and laconic.

1. "In these latter days, a certain blind man, by name Caius, had this oracle vouchsafed to him–'that he should draw near to the altar after the manner of one who could see; then walk from right to left, lay the five fingers of his right hand on the altar, then raise up his hand and place it on his eyes.' And behold! the multitude saw the blind man open his eyes, and they rejoiced, such splendid miracles should signalize the reign of our Emperor Antoninus."

2. "To Lucius, who was so wasted away by pains in his side, that all doubted of his recovery, the god gave this response: 'Approach thou the altar; take ashes from it, mix them up

with wine and then lay thyself on thy sore side.' And the man recovered, and openly returned thanks to the god amidst the congratulations of the people."

3. "To Julian who spitted blood, and was given over by every one, the god granted this response: 'Draw near, take pine apples from off the altar, and eat them with wine for three days. And the man got well, and came and gave thanks in the presence of the people."

4. "A blind soldier, Valerius Asper by name, received this answer from the god: that he should mix the blood of a white cock with milk, make an eye ointment therewith, and rub his eyes with it for three days. And lo! the blind recovered his sight, and came, and publicly gave thanks to the god."

The success with which the Priests of Aesculapius carried on their impostures, and the

popularity which their dexterous management, no less than the vulgar credulity obtained for them, will cease to surprise us on maturer consideration. It could not be a difficult task for them to give the minds of their patients whatever bias was best adapted to their purposes. These credulous beings passed several days and nights in the temple, and their imagination could not fail to be powerfully impressed with what was diligently told them of the prescriptions and cures of Aesculapius; nor to retain during their slumbers many lively impressions of their meditations by day; their priestly nurses too were neither so blind to their own interests, nor so careless of their reputations as to omit the prescribing of such modes of diet and medical remedies as were calculated to appease their patients' sufferings. Besides which, however delusive and empirical their outward ceremonials

and bold pretensions might have been, we should remember, that priests, having some acquaintance with the science of medicine, were generally selected to officiate on those spots where the incubitary process[109] was the order of the day. To this acquaintance were added the results of daily experience, and the frequent opportunities which the incessant demands of the infirm upon their skill afforded them of correcting previous errors and improving their practical knowledge: of gradually ascertaining the various kinds and appearances of human disorders; and of digesting such data as would enable them, with the least possible chance of failure, to prescribe the modes of cure and treatment suitable to the various stages and species of the applicant's maladies. With such means, it would have been not a little singular if the priests of Aesculapius had failed in converting

the popular veneration to his credit and their own emolument.

FOOTNOTES:

[89] The Priestess of Apollo, by whom he delivered oracles. She was called Pythia from the god himself, who was styled Apollo Pythius, from his slaying the serpent Python. The Priestess was to be a pure virgin. She sat on the covercle or lid of a brazen vessel, mounted on a tripod, and thence, after a violent enthusiasm, she delivered his oracles; i.e. she rehearsed a few ambiguous and obscure verses, which were taken for oracles.

[90] These words are but ill explained by the best Greek Lexicographers. Servius ad Virg.,

Aen. vii. 88, says: -Incubare dicuntur proprie hic, qui dormiunt accipienda responsa-. Tertullian de Anima, C. 49, thence calls them -Incubatores fanorum-.

[91] Lib. XI. p. 108. Paris, fol. 1620.

[92] Ibid. lib. XVI. p. 761.

[93] De situ orbis, lib. I. cap. 1.

[94] Plutarch apud Agis et Cleomen. Cicero (de Div. 1. c. 48) probably alludes to this oracle, when he says, that the Ephori of Sparta were accustomed to sleep in the temple of Pasiphae on state emergencies. There was a similar oracle in the neighbourhood of Thalame, not fur from Aetylum, sacred to Ino.

[95] Strabo, lib. VI. p, 284.

[96] Pausanias, 1, 35.

[97] De vita Apoll. Thyan, 11. 37.

[98] Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 801. Anian. Exped. Alex, vii. 6.

[99] In Egypt lib. I, 25.

[100] Galen de comp. Med. p. Gen v. 2.

[101] Podalirius and Machaon, the two sons of Esculapius. The state of medicine at the time of the Trojan war was very imperfect, as we find exemplified by these two acting as surgeons general to the Grecian army. Their simple practice consisted chiefly in extracting darts or arrows, in staunching blood by some infusion of bitter herbs, and sometimes they added charms or incantations; which seemed to be a poetical way of hinting, that frequently wounds were healed or diseases cured in a manner unaccountable by any known properties they could discover either in the effects of their rude remedies, or in the then known powers of the human body to relieve itself. In Homer's description of the wound which Ulysses, when young, received in his thigh from the tusk of an enraged

wild boar, the infusion of blood was stopped by divine incantations and divine songs, and some sort of bandage which must have acted by pressure. If any virtue could have acted as a charm, the very verse that describes the wound might have as good a right to such a claim as any other; but, in what manner the surgeons of ancient Greece, before the discovery of the circulation of the blood, might apply bandages for the purposes here mentioned, is not easily explained; though doubtless these bandages must have acted like a tourniquet, which is now the most effectual remedy for compressing a wounded artery, and thereby stopping an hemorrhage.

[102] Alexand. 1050.

[103] Suet. Claid. c. 28.

[104] Strabo. lib. xiii. Pausan. lib. ii.

[105] Scholia ad Plut. v. 621

[106] Aristoph, Plut act. ii, sc. 6, and iii. sc 2.

[107] Luciani, oper. t. ii. ed Reitzii.

[108] It is often called by antiquaries -Tabella Marmorea apud Maffaeos-, as it was first preserved in the collection.

[109] It is somewhat singular, that Cicero's treatise on divination, as well as the works of Hippocrates and Galen, should be so destitute of information on the subject of a mode of cure which was of such long standing, and so universally esteemed. From the two last, one should at least have expected something more satisfactory: Cos being the birthplace of the one, and Pergamus of the other.

XII. ON AMULETS, CHARMS, TALISMANS–PHILTERS, THEIR ORIGIN AND IMAGINARY EFFICACY, ETC.

Amulets are certain substances worn about

the neck or other parts of the body, under the superstitious impression of preventing diseases, of curing, or removing them.

The origin of amulets may be traced to the most remote ages of mankind. In our researches to discover and fix the period when remedies were first employed for the alleviation of bodily suffering, we are soon lost in conjecture or involved in fable. We are unable, indeed, to reach the period in any country, when the inhabitants were destitute of medical resources, and even among the most uncultivated tribes we find medicine cherished as a blessing and practised as an art. The feelings of the sufferer, and the anxiety of those about him, must, in the rudest state of society, have incited a spirit of industry and research to procure ease, the modification of heat and cold, of moisture and dryness; and the regulation and change

of diet and habit, must intuitively have suggested themselves for the relief of pain; and when these resources failed, charms, amulets, and incantations, were the natural expedients of the barbarians, ever more inclined to indulge the delusive hope of superstition than to listen to the voice of sober reason.

Traces of amulets may be discovered in very early history, though Dr. Warburton is evidently in error when he fixes the origin of these magical instruments to the age of the Ptolomies, which was not more than three hundred years before Christ. This assertion is refuted by Galen, who informs us the Egyptian King Nechepsus, who lived 630 years before Christ, had written, that a green jasper cut into the form of a dragon surrounded with rays, if applied externally, would strengthen the stomach and organs of digestion. This opinion, moreover, is

supported by scripture: for what were the ear-rings which Jacob buried under the oak of Sechem, as related in Genesis, but amulets. And Josephus in his antiquities of the Jews,[110] informs us that Solomon discovered a plant efficacious in the cure of epilepsy, and that he employed the aid of a charm, for the purposes of assisting its virtues. The root of the herb was concealed in a ring, which was applied to the nostrils of the demoniac; and Josephus remarks that he saw himself a Jewish priest practise the art of Solomon with complete success in the presence of the Emperor Vespasian, his sons and the tribunes of the Roman army. From this art of Solomon, exhibited through the medium of a ring or seal, we have the Eastern stories which celebrate the seal of Solomon, and record the potency of his sway over the various orders of demons or of genii, who were supposed to be

the invincible tormentors or benefactors of the human race.

Nor were such means confined to dark and barbarous ages. Theophrastus pronounced Pericles to be insane in consequence of seeing him with an amulet suspended from his neck. And in the declining era of the Roman Empire, we find this superstitious custom so general that the Emperor Caracalla was induced to make a public edict, ordering, that no man should wear any superstitious amulets about his person.

All remedies working as it were sympathetically, and plainly unequal to the effect, may be termed amulets; whether used at a distance by another person, or carried immediately about the patient. By the Jews, amulets were called -kamea-, and by the Greeks -phylacteries-. The latins called them -amuleta- or -ligatura-; the catholics -agnus dei-, or consecrated relics; and

the natives of Guinea -fetishes-. Various kinds of substances are employed by different people, and which they venerate and suppose capable of preserving them from danger and infection, as well as to remove disease when present. Plutarch says of Pericles, an Athenian general, that when a friend come to see him, and inquired after his health he reached out his hand and shewed him his amulet; by which he meant to intimate the truth of his illness, and, at the same time, the confidence he placed in these popular remedies.

Amulets are still prevalent in catholic countries at the present day; the Spaniards and Portuguese maintain their popularity. Among the Jews they are equally venerated. Indeed, there are few instances of ancient superstition some portion of which has not been preserved, and not unfrequently have they been adopted by

men of otherwise good understanding, who plead in excuse, that they are innoxious, cost little, and if they can do no good, they can do no harm.

Lord Bacon, whom no one can suspect of ignorance, says, that if a man wear a bone ring or a planet seal, strongly believing, by that means, that he might obtain his mistress, and that it would preserve him unhurt at sea, or in a battle, it would probably make him more active and less timid; as the audacity they might inspire would conquer and bind weaker minds in the execution of a peculiar duty.

AMULETS USED BY THE COMMON PEOPLE.

A variety of things are worn about the person by the common people for the cure of ague; and, upon whatever principle it may be accounted for, whether by the imagination or a natural termination of the disease, many have apparently been cured by them, where the Peruvian bark, the boasted specific, had previously failed. Dr. Willis says that charms resisting agues have

often been applied to the wrist with success. ABRACADABRA, written in a peculiar manner, that is, in the form of a cone, it is said, has cured the ague; the herb lunaria, gathered by moon-light, has, on some high authorities, performed surprising cures. Perhaps it was gathered during the invocating influence of the following charm, which may be found in the 12th book, chap. XIV. p. 177 of "Scot's discovery of witchcraft," which is headed thus:–

"-Another charme that witches use at the gathering of their medicinal herbs.-"

Haile be thou holy herbe, Growing in the ground. And in the mount Calvaire First wert thou found. Thou art good for many a sore, And healest many a wound, In the name of sweet Jesus I take thee from the ground.

We are told that Naaman was cured by dipping seven times in the river Jordan. Certain

formalities were also performed at the pool of Bethesda. Dr. Chamberlayne's anodyne necklaces, were, for a length of time, objects of the most anxious maternal solicitude, until their occult virtues became lost by the reverence for them being destroyed; and those which succeeded them have long since run their race or nearly so.

The grey limewort was at one time supposed to have been a specific in hydrophobia–that it not only cured those labouring under this disorder, but by carrying it about the person, it was reputed to possess the extraordinary power of preventing mad dogs from biting them. Calvert paid devotions to St. Hubert for the recovery of his son, who was cured by this means. The son also performed the necessary rites at the shrine, and was cured not only of the hydrophobia "but of the worser phrensy with which his

father had instilled him." Cramp-rings were also used; and eelskins to this day are tied round the legs as a preventive of this spasmodic affection; and by laying sticks across the floor, on going to bed, cramp has also been prevented.

Numerous are the charms and incantations used at the present day for the removal of warts, many cases of which are not a little surprising. And we are told by Lord Verulam, who is allowed to have been as great a genius as this country ever produced, that, when he was at Paris, he had above a hundred warts on his hands; and that the English ambassador's lady, then at court, and a woman far above superstition, removed them all by only rubbing them with the fat side of the rind of a piece of bacon, which they afterwards nailed to a post, with the fat side towards the south. In five weeks, says my Lord, they were all removed. The fol-

lowing are his Lordship's observations, in his own words, relative to the power of amulets. After deep metaphysical observations on nature, and arguing in mitigation of sorcery, witchcraft, and divination, effects that far outstrip the belief in amulets, he observes "We should not reject all of this kind, because it is not known how far those contributing to superstition, depend on natural causes. Charms have not the power from contract with evil spirits, but proceed wholly from strengthening the imagination: in the same manner that images and their influence, have prevailed on religion, being called from a different way of use and application, sigils, incantations, and spells."

ECCENTRICITIES, CAPRICES, AND EFFECTS, OF THE IMAGINATION.

A certain writer, apologizing for the irregularities of great genii, delivers himself as follows: ”The gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task upon, the vigilance of reason; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude or invariable propriety, requires a degree of firmness and of

cool attention, which does not always attend the higher gifts of the mind. Yet, difficult as nature herself seems to have reduced the task of regularity to genius, it is the supreme consolation of dullness, to seize upon those excesses, which are the overflowings of faculties they never enjoyed."[111] Are not the -gifts of imagination- mistaken here for the strength of passions? Doubtless, where strong passions accompany great parts, as perhaps they often do, the imagination may encrease their force and activity: but, where passions are calm and gentle, imagination of itself should seem to have no conflict but speculatively with reason. There, indeed, it wages an eternal war; and, if not contracted and strictly regulated, it will carry the patient into endless extravagancies. The term patient is here properly used, because men, under the influence of imagination, are most truly

distempered. The degree of this distemper will be in proportion to the prevalence of imagination over reason, and, according to this proportion, amount to more or less of the whimsical; but when reason shall become, as it were, extinct, and imagination govern alone, then the distemper will be madness under the wildest and most fantastic modes. Thus, one of those invalids, perhaps, shall be all sorrow for having been most unjustly deprived of the crown; though his vocation, poor man! be that of a school-master. Another, like Horace's madman, is all joy; and it may seem even cruelty to cure him.

The operations and caprices of the imagination are various and endless; and, as they cannot be reduced to regularity or system, so it is highly improbable that any certain method of cure should ever be found out for them. It

has generally been thought, that matter of fact might most successfully be opposed to the delusions of imagination, as being proof to the senses, and carrying conviction unavoidably to the understanding; but we rather suspect, that the understanding or reasoning faculty, has little to do in all these cases: at least so it should seem from the two following facts, which are by no means badly attested.

Fienus, in his curious little book, -de Viribus Imaginationis-, records from Donatus the case of a man, who fancied his body encreased to such a size, that he durst not attempt to pass through the door of his chamber. The physician believing that nothing could more effectually cure this error of imagination, than to shew that the thing could actually be done, caused the patient to be thrust forcibly through it: who, struck with horror, and falling suddenly into

agonies, complained of being crushed to pieces, and expired soon after.[112]

The other case, as related by Van Swieten, in his commentaries upon Boerhaave, is that of a learned man, who had studied, till be fancied his legs to be of glass: in consequence of which he durst not attempt to stir, but was constantly under anxiety about them. His maid bringing one day some wood to the fire, threw it carelessly down; and was severely reprimanded by her master, who was terrified not a little for his legs of glass. The surly wench, out of all patience with his megrims, as she called them, gave him a blow with a log upon the parts affected; which so enraged him, that he instantly rose up, and from that moment recovered the use of his legs.–Was reason concerned any more here; or was it not rather one blind impulse acting against another?

Imagination has, unquestionably, a most powerful effect upon the mind, and in all these miraculous cures, is by far the strongest ingredient. Dr. Strother says, "The influence of the mind and passions works upon the mind and body in sensible operations like a medicine, and is of far the greater force than exercise. The countenance betrays a good or wicked intention; and that good or wicked intention will produce in different persons a strength to encounter, or a weakness to yield to the preponderating side." Dr. Brown says, "Our looks discover our passions, there being mystically in our faces certain characters, which carry in them the motto of our souls, and, therefore, probably work secret effects in other parts." This idea is beautifully illustrated by Garth in his Dispensatory, in the following lines:–

"Thus paler looks impetuous rage proclaim,

And chilly virgins redden into flame. See envy oft transformed in wan disguise, And mirth sits gay and smiling in the eyes, Oft our complexions do the soul declare, And tell what passions in the features are. Hence 'tis we look the wond'rous cause to find, How body acts upon impassive mind."

On the power and pleasure of the imagination, from the pleasures and pains it administers here below, Addison concludes that God, who knows all the ways of afflicting us, may so transport us hereafter with such beautiful and glorious visions, or torment us with such hideous and ghastly spectres, as might even of themselves suffice to make up the entire heaven or hell of any future being.

DOCTRINE OF EFFLUVIA– MIRACULOUS CURES BY MEANS OF CHARMS, AMULETS, ETC.

Dr. Willis, in his Treatise on nervous disorders, does not hesitate to recommend amulets

in epileptic disorders. ”Take,” says he, ”some fresh peony roots, cut them into square bits, and hang them round the neck, changing them as often as they dry.” It is not improbable that the hint was taken from this circumstance for the anodyne necklaces, which, some time ago, were in such repute, as the Doctor, some little way further on, prescribes the same root for the looseness, fevers, and convulsions of children, during the time of teething, mixed, to make it appear more miraculous, with some elk’s hoof.

St. Vitus’s dance is said to have been cured by the afflicted person paying a visit to the tomb of the saint, near Ulm, every May. Indeed, there is no little reason in this assertion; for exercise and change of air will change many obstinate diseases. The bite of the tarantula is cured by music; and this only by certain tunes. Turner, whose ideas are so extravagantly ab-

surd, where he asserts, that the symptoms of hydrophobia may not appear for forty years after the bite of the dog, and who maintains that "the slaver or breath of such a dog is infectious;" and that men bitten by mad dogs, will bite like dogs again, and die mad; although he laughs at the anodyne necklaces, argues much in the same manner. It is not, indeed, so very strange that the effluvia from external medicines entering our bodies, should effect such considerable changes, when we see the efficient cause of apoplexy, epilepsy, hysterics, plague, and a number of other disorders, consists, as it were, in imperceptible vapours.–Blood-stone (Lapis Aetites) fastened to the arm by some secret means, is said to prevent abortion. Sydenham, in the iliac passion, orders a live kitten to be constantly applied to the abdomen; others have used pigeons split alive, applied to the

soles of the feet, with success, in pestilential fevers and convulsions. It was doubtless the impression that relief might be obtained by external agents, that the court of king David advised him to seek a young virgin, in order that a portion of the natural heat might be communicated to his body, and give strength to the decay of nature. "Take the heart and liver of the fish and make a smoke, and the devil shall smell it and flee away." During the plague at Marseilles, which Belort attributed to the larvae of worms infecting the saliva, food, and chyle; and which, he says, "were hatched by the stomach, took their passage into the blood, at a certain size, hindering the circulation, affecting the juices and solid parts." He advised amulets of mercury to be worn in bags suspended at the chest and nostrils, either as a safeguard, or as means of cure; by which method, through the -

admissiveness- of the pores, effluvia specially destructive of all venomous insects, were received into the blood. "An illustrious prince," Belort says, "by wearing such an amulet, escaped the small-pox."

Clognini, an Italian physician, ordered two or three drachms of crude mercury to be worn as a defensive against the jaundice; and also as a preservative against the noxious vapours of inclement seasons: "It breaks," he observes, "and conquers the different figured seeds of pestilential distempers floating in the air; or else, mixing with the air, kills them where hatched." By others, the power of mercury, in these cases, has been ascribed to an elective faculty given out by the warmth of the body, which draws out the contagious particles. For, according to this entertained notion, all bodies are continually emitting effluvia, more or less, around them,

and some whether they are internal or external. The Bath waters, for instance, change the colour of silver in the pocket of those who use them. Mercury produces the same effect; Tartar emetic, rubbed on the pit of the stomach, produces vomiting. Yawning and laughing are infectious; so are fear and shame. The sight of sour things, or even the idea of them, will set the teeth on edge. Small-pox, itch, and other diseases, are contagious; if so, say they, mercurial amulets bid fair to destroy the germ of some complaints when used only as an external application, either by manual attrition, or worn as an amulet. But medicated or not, all amulets are precarious and uncertain, and in the cure of diseases are, by no means, to be trusted to.

The Barbary Moors, and generally throughout the Mahommedan dominions, the people

are strikingly attached to charms, to which, and nature, they leave the cure of almost every disorder; and this is the most strongly impressed upon them from their belief in predestination, which, according to their creed, stipulates the evil a man is to suffer, as well as the length of time it is ordained he should live upon the land of his forefathers; consequently they imagine that any interference from secondary means would avail them nothing, an opinion said to have been entertained by William III, but one by no means calculated for nations, liberty, and commerce; upon the principle that when the one was entrenched upon, men would probably be more sudden in their revenge, and dislike physic and occupation; and when actuated with religious enthusiasm, nothing could stand them in any service.

The opinion of an old navy surgeon,[113] on

the subject, is worth recording here. "A long and intense passion on one object, whether of pride, love, fear, anger, or envy, we see have brought on some universal tremors; on others, convulsions, madness, melancholy, consumption, hectics, or such a chronical disorder as has wasted their flesh, or their strength, as certainly as the taking in of any poisonous drugs would have done. Anything frightful, sudden, or surprising, upon soft, timorous natures, not only shews itself in the continuance, but produces sometimes very troublesome consequences–for instance, a parliamentary fright will make even grown men -bewray- themselves, scare them out of their wits, turn the hair grey. Surprise removes the hooping cough; looking from precipices or seeing wheels turn swiftly will give giddiness. Shall then these little accidents, or the passions, (from caprice or humour, perhaps,) pro-

duce those effects, and not be able to do anything by amulets? No; as the spirits, in many cases, resort in plenty, we find where the fancy determines, giving joy and gladness to the heart, strength and fleetness to the limbs, and violent palpitations. To amulets, under strong imagination, is carried with more force to a distempered part, and, under these circumstances, its natural powers exert better to a discussion.

”The cures compassed in this manner,” says our author, ”are not more admirable than many of the distempers themselves. Who can apprehend by what impenetrable method the bite of a mad dog, or tarantula, can produce these symptoms? The touch of a torpedo numbness? If they are allowed to do these, doubtless they may the other; and not by miracles, which Spinoza denies the possibility of, but by natural and regular causes, though inscrutable to us. The

best way, therefore, in using amulets, must be in squaring them to the imagination of patients: let the newness and surprise exceed the invention, and keep up the humour by a long scroll of cures and vouchers; by these and such means, many distempers have been cured. Quacks again, according to their boldness and way of addressing (velvet and infallibility particularly) command success by striking the fancies of an audience. If a few, more sensible than the rest, see the doctor's miscarriages, and are not easily gulled at first sight, yet, when they see a man is never ashamed, in time, jump in to his assistance."

There is much truth and pertinence in some of the above remarks, and they apply nearly to the general practice of the present day. The farces and whims of people require often as much discrimination on the part of the physician as the disease itself. Those who know best how

to flatter such caprices, are frequently the best paid for their trouble. Nervous diseases are always in season, and it is here that some professional dexterity is pardonable. Nature, when uninterrupted, will often do more than art; but our inability upon all occasions to appreciate the efforts of nature in the cure of diseases, must always render our notion, with respect to the powers faith, liable to numerous errors and deceptions. There is, in fact, nothing more natural, and at the same time more erroneous, than to lay the cure of a disease to the door of the last medicine that had been prescribed. By these means the advocates of amulets and charms, have ever been enabled to appeal to the testimony of what they are pleased to call experience in justification of their pretensions, and egregious superstitions; and cases which, in truth, ought to have been classed, or rather

designated, as lucky escapes, have been triumphantly pulled off as skilful cures; and thus, medicines and medical practitioners, have alike received the meed of unmerited praise, or the stigma of unjust censure. Of all branches of human science, medicine is one of the most interesting to mankind: and, accordingly as it is erroneously or judiciously cultivated, is evidently conducive to the prejudice or welfare of the public. Of how great consequence is it, then, that our endeavours should be exerted in stemming the propagation of errors, whether arising from ignorance, or prompted by motives of base cupidity, in giving assistance to the disseminations of useful truths, and to the perfection of ingenious discoveries.

FOOTNOTES:

[110] Lib. viii. chap. 2. 5.

[111] Langhorne's Life of Mr. Collins

[112] Reverii Praxis Medica, p. 188.

[113] John Ailkin, author of the Navy Surgeon, 1742. Sec Demonologia, p. 64 et seg.

XIII. ON TALISMANS–SOME CURIOUS, NATURAL ONES, ETC.

The Egyptian amulets are not so ancient as the Babylonian talismans, but in their uses they were exactly similar. Some little figures, supposed to have been intended as charms, have been found on several mummies, which, at various times, have been brought to Europe. Plutarch

informs us that the soldiers wore rings, on which the representation of an insect resembling our beetle, was inscribed; and we learn from Aelian, that the judges had always suspended round their necks a small figure of Truth formed of emeralds. The superstitious belief in the virtues of talismans is yet far from being extinct, the Copths, the Arabians, the Syrians, and, indeed, almost all the inhabitants of Asia, west of the Ganges, whether Christians or mahometans, still use them against possible evils.

There is little distinction between talismans, amulets and the gree-grees of the Africans as regards their pretended efficacy; though there is some in their external configuration. Magical figures, engraven or cut under superstitious observances of the characterisms and configurations of the heavens, are called talismans; to which astrologers, hermetical philosophers,

and other adepts, attribute wonderful virtues, particularly that of calling down celestial influences.[114]

The talismans of the Samothracians, so famous of old, were pieces of iron formed into certain images, and set in rings. They were reputed as preservatives against all kinds of evils. There were other talismans taken from vegetables, and others from minerals. Three kinds of talismans were usually distinguished 1st. the -astronomical- known by the signs or constellations of the heavens engraven upon them, with other figures, and some unintelligible characters; 2nd. the -magical-, bearing very extraordinary figures, with superstitious words and names of angels unheard of; 3rd. the -mixt- talismans, which consist of signs and barbarous words; but without any superstitious ones, or names of angels.

It has been asserted and maintained by some Rabins, that the brazen serpent raised by Moses in the wilderness, for the destruction of the serpents that annoyed the Israelites, was properly a talisman. All the miraculous things wrought by Apollonius Tyanaeus are attributed to the virtue and influence of -talismans-; and that wizard, as he is called, is even said to be the inventor of them. Some authors take several Runic medals,–medals, at least, whose inscriptions are in the Runic characters,–for talismans, it being notorious that the northern nations, in their heathen state, were much devoted to them, M. Keder, however has shown, that the medals here spoken of are quite other things than talismans.

It appears from the Evangelists[115] that, when St. Paul, after he had been shipwrecked, and escaped to the island of Malta, a viper fas-

tened on his hand as he was laying a bundle of sticks, he had gathered, on the fire; and that, by a miracle, and to the great astonishment of the spectators, inhabitants of the island, he not only suffered no harm, but also cured, by the divine power, the chief of the island, and a great number of others, of very dangerous maladies. There remain still in that island, as so many trophies gained by the Apostle over that venemous beast, a great many small stones representing the eyes and tongues of serpents, and considered for several centuries past, as powerful amulets against different sorts of distempers and poisons. As the virtue of these stones is still much boasted of by the Maltese, and as some, on the contrary, maintain that they are the petrified teeth of a fish called lamia, it will not be irrelevant here to relate some observations from the best authors on this interesting

subject, so much to our purpose.

It is said that those eyes and tongues of serpents are only found by the Maltese when they dig into the earth, which is whitish throughout the island, or draw up stone, especially about the cave of St. Paul. This stone is so soft, that, like clay, it may be cut through with any sharp instrument, and made to receive easily different figures, for building the walls of their houses and ramparts; but, when it has been imbibed with a sufficient quantity of rain or well water, it changes into a flint that resists the cutting of the sharpest instrument: whence the houses that are built of it in the two cities, appear as hewn out of one solid rock, and become harder, the more they are exposed to the inclemencies of the weather. This hardness may, with good reason, be ascribed to the salt of nitre, which contracts a certain viscidity from the

rain wherewith it is mixed, and which easily penetrates into these stones, because their substance is spongy and cretaceous, and adheres to the tongue as hartshorn.

It is in these stones that not only the eyes and tongues of serpents are found, but also their viscera and other parts: as lungs, liver, heart, spleen, ribs, and so resembling life, and with such natural colours, that one may well doubt whether they are the work of nature or art; the figure of the eyes and tongues is very different. Some are elliptic, but, for the greater part round: some represent an hemisphere, others a segment, others an hyperbola. The glossopetrae are naturally of a conic figure, representing acute, obtuse, regular, and irregular cones. They are also of different colours, especially the eyes; for some of them are of an ash-colour, others liver colour, some brown, others

blackish; but these, as most rare, are most esteemed. Bracelets are frequently made of them and set in gold: some representing an entire eye with a white pupil, and these are the most beautiful. Several are likewise found of an orange colour.

The virtues attributed by the Maltese to those eyes and tongues, and to the white earth which is found in the island, particularly in St. Paul's cave, and which is kept for use by the apothecaries, as the American bole, are very singular; for they reckon them not only a preservative against all sorts of poison, and an efficacious remedy for those who have taken poison, but also good in a number of diseases. They are taken internally, infused in water, wine, or in any other convenient liquor; or let to lie for some hours in vessels made of the white earth; or the white earth is taken itself dissolved in

those liquors. The eyes set as precious stones in rings, and so as to touch immediately the flesh, are worn by the inhabitants on the fingers; but the tongues are fastened about the arm, or suspended from the neck.

Paul Bucconi, a Sicilian nobleman, treated this notion of the eyes and tongues of serpents as a mere vulgar error; and maintains that they either constitute a particular species of stone produced in the earth, or in the stones of the island of Malta, as in their matrix; or that they are nothing more than the petrified teeth of some marine fish; which is also the opinion of Fabius Columna, Nicholas Steno and other physicians and anatomists.

It seems to this noble author that the glossopetrae should be classed in the animal kingdom, because, being burnt, they are changed into cinders as bones, before they are reduced

into a calx or ashes, whilst calcined stones are immediately reduced into a calx. He further says, that the roots of the glossopetrae are often found broken in different ways, which is an evident argument that they have not been produced by nature, in the place they are digged out of, because nature forms other fossils, figured entirely in their matrix, without any hurt or mutilation. Add to this, that the substance is different in different parts of the glossopetrae; solid at the point, less solid at the root, compact at the surface, porous and fibrous in the interior: besides, the polished surface, contrary to the custom of nature, which forms no stone, whether common or precious, is polished; and, lastly, the figure that varies different ways, as well as the size, being found great, broad, triangular, narrow, small, very small, pyramidal, straight, curved before, behind, to the right and

to the left, in form of a saw with small teeth, furnished with great jags or notches, and frequently absolutely pyramidal without notches; all these particulars favour his opinion. But, as he thence believes he has proved that the glossopetrae should not be classed amongst stones, so also what he has said may prove that they are the natural teeth of those fishes, which are called, by lithographers, lamia, aquila, requiem, (shark) etc. and therefore there scarce remains any reason for a further doubt on this head.

There are representations of curiosities, which we shall give an account of from the Ephemerides of the Curious. It is customary to see at Batavia, in the island of Java, the figure of serpents impressed on the shells of eggs, Andrew Cleyerus, a naturalist of considerable note, says, that when he was at Batavia in 1679, he had seen himself, on the 14th of September, an egg newly laid

by a hen, of the ordinary size, but representing very exactly, towards the summit of the other part of the shell, the figure of a serpent and all its parts, not only the lineaments of the serpent were marked on the surface, but the three dimensions of the body were as sensible as if they had been engraved by an able sculptor, or impressed on wax, plaister or some other like matter. One could see very plainly the head, ears, and a cloven tongue starting out of the throat; the eyes were sparkling and resplendent, and represented so perfectly the interior and exterior of the parts of the eye, with their natural colours, that they seemed to behold with astonishment the eyes even of the spectators. To account for this phenomenon, it may be supposed that, the hen being near laying, a serpent presented itself to her sight, and that her imagination, struck thereby, impressed the figure of

the serpent on the egg that was ready to press out of the ovarium.

An egg equally wonderful, was laid by a hen at Rome on the 14th. of December, 1680. The famous comet that appeared then on the head of Andromeda, with other stars, were seen represented on its shell. Sebastian Scheffer says, that he had seen an egg with the representation of an eclipse on it. Signor Magliabecchi, in his letter to the academy of the Curious, on the 20th. of October 1682, has these words; "Last month I had sent me from Rome, a drawing of an egg found at Tivoli, with the impression of the sun and the transparent comet with a twisted tail."

There are also representations of Indian nuts, or small cocos, with the head of an ape. The nut has been exactly engraved in the Ephemerides of the Curious, both as to size and form, and

covered with its shell, as expressed there by cyphers and other figures which represent the same nut stripped of its covering, and exhibiting the head of an ape. This nut seems pretty much like the foreign fruit described by Clusius, Exoticorum lib. a, which John Bauhin (Hist. Plant. Universal Lib. 3) retaining the description of Clusius, calls, "a nut resembling the areca," and which C. Bauhin (Pinac. lib. II, sect. 6) calls, the fruit of the fourteenth of Palm-tree, that bears nuts, or a foreign fruit of the same sort as the areca.

This fruit with its shell, is, as Clusius says, an inch and a half in length, but is somewhat more than an inch thick. Its shell or membraneous covering, is about the thickness of the blade of a knife, and outwardly of an ash colour mixed with brown. Clusius was in the right to say, that the shell of this nut was formed of

several fibrous parts, but those fibres resemble rather those of the shell of a coco, than the fibrous parts of the back of the areca nut. He, moreover, has very properly observed, that this shell is armed, at its lower part, with a double calyx and that the opposite part terminates in a point; but it is necessary to observe, that this point is not formed by the prolongation of the shell, as the figure he has given of it seems to specify; but that from the middle of the upper part of the fruit, there juts out a sort of small needle.

The shell being taken off, the nut is found to be hard, ligneous, oblong, of unequal surface, furrowed, and of a chesnut yellow. One of its extremities is roundish, and the other, by the reunion and prolongation of three sorts of tubercles, terminates in a point; those protuberances being so formed, that the middlemost

placed between the two others, has the appearance of a nose, and the two lateral protuberances resemble flat lips. On each side of that which forms what we call the nose, a small hole or nook is perceived, capable of containing a pea; but does not penetrate deep, and is surrounded with black filaments, sometimes like eye-brows and eyelashes, so that the nut on that side resembles an ape or a hare.

This -lusus naturae-, or sport of nature, has a very pretty effect, but is oftener found in stones than other substances. A great variety of such rare and singular productions of nature may be seen at the British Museum: but nothing can be more extraordinary in this respect than what is related concerning the agate of Pyrrhus, which represented, naturally, Apollo holding a lyre, with the nine muses distinguished each by their attributes. In all probability, there is great

exaggeration in this fact, for we see nothing of the kind that comes near this perfection. However, it is said, that, at Pisa, in the church of St. John, there is seen, on a stone, an old hermit perfectly painted by nature, sitting near a rivulet, and holding a bell in his hand; and that, in the temple of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, there is to be seen, on a white sacred marble, an image of St. John the Baptist, cloaked with a camel's skin, but so far defective that nature has given him but one foot.

There is an instance in the Mercury of France, for July 1730, of some curious sports of nature on insects. The rector of St. James at Land, within a league of Rennes, found in the month of March, 1730, in the church-yard, a species of butterfly, about two inches long, and half-an-inch broad, having on its head the figure of a death's-head, of the length of one nail, and

perfectly imitating those that are represented on the church ornaments which are used for the office of the dead. Two large wings were spotted like a pall, and the whole body covered with a down, or black hair, diversified with black and yellow, bearing some resemblance to yellow.

These freaks of nature are equally extended to animate as to inanimate bodies; and the human species, as well as the brute creation, affords numerous specimens, not only of redundance and deficiency in her work, but a variety of other phenomena not well understood. The march of intellect, however, it is to be hoped, will be as successful in this instance, as in obliterating the hobgoblins of astrologers and quacks who so long have ruled the destiny and health of their less sagacious fellow-creatures;–and when the public shall become persuaded of the ad-

vantages which science may derive from occurrences similar to those we shall enumerate in the next chapter, it will be more disposed to offer them to the consideration of scientific men.

FOOTNOTES:

[114] The author of a book, entitled "-Talismans justifies-" pronounces a talisman to be the seal, figure, character, or image of a heavenly sign, constellation or planet, engraven on a sympathetic stone, or on a metal corresponding to the star, etc. in order to receive its influences.

[115] Acts of the Apostles, chap. xxviii. v. 3.

XIV. ON THE MEDICINAL POWERS ATTRIBUTED TO MUSIC BY THE ANCIENTS.

The power of music over the human mind, as well as its influence on the animal creation, has been variously attested; and its curative virtues have been no less extolled by the ancients.[116] Martianus Capella assures us, that

fevers were removed by songs, and that Asclepiades cured deafness by the sound of the trumpet. Wonderful indeed! that the same noise which would occasion deafness in some, should be a specific for it in others! It is making the viper cure its own bite. But, perhaps Asclepiades was the inventor of the -acousticon-, or ear-trumpet, which has been thought a modern discovery; or of the speaking-trumpet, which is a kind of cure for distant deafness. These would be admirable proofs of musical power![117] We have the testimony of Plutarch, and several other ancient writers, that Thaletas the Cretan, delivered the Lacedemonians from the pestilence by the sweetness of his lyre.

Xenocrates, as Martianus Capella further informs us, employed the sound of instruments in the cure of maniacs; and Apollonius Dyscolus, in his fabulous history (Historia Commen-

titia) tells us, from Theophrastus's Treatise upon Enthusiasm, that music is a sovereign remedy for a dejection of spirits, and disordered mind; and that the sound of the flute will cure epilepsy and the sciatic gout. Athenaeus quotes the same passage from Theophrastus, with this additional circumstance, that, as to the second of these disorders, to render the cure more certain, the flute should play in the Phrygian mode. But Aulus Gellius, who mentions this remedy, seems to administer it in a very different manner, by prescribing to the flute-player a soft and gentle strain, -si modulis lenibus- says he, -tibicen incinet-: for the Phrygian mode was remarkably vehement and furious.

This is what Coelius Aurelianus calls -loca dolentia decantare-, enchanting the disordered places. He even tells us how the enchantment is brought about upon these occasions, in say-

ing that the pain is relieved by causing a vibration of the fibres of the afflicted part. Galen speaks seriously of playing the flute on the suffering part, upon the principle, we suppose, of a medicated vapour bath.

The sound of the flute was likewise a specific for the bite of a viper, according to Theophrastus and Democritus, whose authority Aulus Gellius gives for his belief of the fact. But there is nothing more extraordinary among the virtues attributed to music by the ancients, than what Aristotle relates in its supposed power of softening the rigour of punishment. The Tyrhenians, says he, never scourge their slaves, but by the sound of flutes, looking upon it as an instance of humanity to give some counterpoise to pain, and thinking by such a diversion to lessen the sum total of the punishment. To this account may be added a passage from Jul. Pal-

lus, by which we learn, that in the -triremes-, or vessels with three banks of oars, there was always a -tibicen-, or flute-player, not only to mark the time, or cadence for each stroke of the oar, but to sooth and cheer the rowers by the sweetness of the melody. And from this custom Quintilian took occasion to say, that music is the gift of nature, to enable us the more patiently to support toil and labour.[118]

These are the principal passages which antiquity furnishes, relative to the medicinal effects of music; in considering which, reliance is placed on the judgment of M. Burette, whose opinions will come with the more weight, as he had not only long made the music of the ancients his particular study, but was a physician by profession. This writer, in a dissertation on the subject, has examined and discussed many of the stories above related, concerning the ef-

fects of music in the cure of diseases. He allows it to be possible, and even probable, that music, by reiterated strokes and vibrations given to the nerves, fibres, and animal spirits, may be of use in the cure of certain diseases; yet he by no means supposes that the music of the ancients possessed this power in a greater degree than the modern music, but rather that a very coarse and vulgar music is as likely to operate effectually on such occasions as the most refined and perfect. The savages of America pretend to perform these cures by the music and jargon of their imperfect instruments; and in Apulia, where the bite of the tarantula is pretended to be cured by music, which excites a desire to dance, it is by an ordinary tune, very coarsely performed.[119]

Baglivi refines on the doctrine of effluvia, by ascribing his cures of the bite of the tarantula

to the peculiar undulation any instrument or tune makes by its strokes in the air; which, vibrating upon the external parts of the patient, is communicated to the whole nervous system, and produces that happy alteration in the solids and fluids which so effectually contributes to the cure. The contraction of the solids, he says, impresses new mathematical motions and directions to the fluids; in one or both of which is seated all distempers, and without any other help than a continuance of faith, will alter their quality; a philosophy as wonderful and intricate as the nature of the poison it is intended to expel; but which, however, supplies this observation, that, if the particles of sound can do so much, the effluvia of amulets may do more.

Credulity must be very strong in those who believe it possible for music to drive away the pestilence. Antiquity, however, as mentioned

above, relates that Thaletas, a famous lyric poet, contemporary with Solon, was gifted with this power; but it is impossible to render the fact credible, without qualifying it by several circumstances omitted in the relation. In the first place, it is certain, that this poet was received among the Lacedemonians during the plague, by command of an oracle: that by virtue of this mission, all the poetry of the hymns which he sung, must have consisted of prayers and supplications, in order to avert the anger of the gods against the people, whom he exhorted to sacrifices, expiations, purifications, and many other acts of devotion, which, however superstitious, could not fail to agitate the minds of the multitude, and to produce nearly the same effects as public fasts, and, in catholic countries, processions, as at present, in times of danger, by exalting the courage, and by an-

imating hope. The disease having, probably, reached its highest pitch of malignity when the musician arrived, must afterwards have become less contagious by degrees; till, at length, ceasing of itself, by the air wafting away the seeds of infection, and recovering its former purity, the extirpation of the disease was attributed by the people to the music of Thaletas, who had been thought the sole mediator, to whom they owed their happy deliverance.

This is exactly what Plutarch means, who tells the story; and what Homer meant, in attributing the curation of the plague among the Greeks, at the siege of Troy, to music:

With hymns divine the joyous banquet ends,
The Poeans lengthen'd till the sun descends:
The Greeks restor'd, the grateful notes prolong;
Apollo listens and approves the song.[120]

For the poet in these lines seems only to

say, that Apollo was rendered favourable, and had delivered the Greeks from the scourge with which they were attacked, in consequence of Chriseis having been restored to her father, and of sacrifices and offerings.

M. Burette thinks it easy to conceive, that music may be really efficacious in relieving, if not in removing, the pains of sciatica; and that independent of the greater or less skill of the musician. He supposes this may be effected in two different ways: first, by flattering the ear, and diverting the attention; and, secondly, by occasioning oscillations and vibrations of the nerves, which may, perhaps, give motions to the humours, and remove the obstructions which occasion this disorder. In this manner the action of musical sounds upon the fibres of the brain and animal spirits, may sometimes soften and alleviate the sufferings of epileptics and lu-

natics, and calm even the most violent fits of these two cruel disorders. And if antiquity affords examples of this power, we can oppose to them some of the same kind said to have been effected by music, not of the most exquisite sort. For not only M. Burette, but many modern philosophers, physicians, and anatomists, as well as ancient poets and historians, have believed, that music has the power of affecting, not only the mind, but the nervous system, in such a manner as will give a temporary relief in certain diseases, and, at length, even operate a radical cure.

In the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences for 1707 and 1708, we meet with many accounts of diseases, which, after having resisted and baffled all the most efficacious remedies in common use, had, at length, given way to the soft impressions of harmony. M. de Mairan, in

the Memoirs of the same Academy, 1737, reasons upon the medicinal powers of music in the following manner:–"It is from the mechanical and involuntary connexion between the organ of hearing, and the consonances excited in the outward air, joined to the rapid communication of the vibrations of this organ to the whole nervous system, that we owe the cure of spasmodic disorders, and of fevers attended with a delirium and convulsions, of which our Memoirs furnish many examples."

The late learned Dr. Branchini, professor of physic at Udine, collected all the passages preserved in ancient authors, relative to the medicinal application of music, by Asclepiades; and it appears from this work that it was used as a remedy by the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, not only in acute, but chronical disorders. This writer gives several

cases within his own knowledge, in which music has been efficacious; but the consideration as well as the honour of these, more properly belong to -modern- than to ancient music.

Music, of all arts, gives the most universal pleasure, and pleases longest and oftenest. Infants are charmed with the melody of sounds, and old age is animated by enlivening notes. The Arcadian shepherds drew pleasure from their reeds; the solitude of Achilles was cheered by his lyre; the English peasant delights in his pipe and tabor; the mellifluous notes of the flute solace many an idle hour; and the charming of snakes and other venomous reptiles, by the power of music, is well attested among the Indians. "Music and the sounds of instruments," says Vigneul de Marville, "contribute to the health of the body and mind; they assist the circulation of the blood, they dissipate vapours, and

open the vessels, so that the action of perspiration is freer." The same author tells a story of a person of distinction, who assured him, that once being suddenly seized with a violent illness, instead of a consultation of physicians, he immediately called a band of musicians, and their violins acted so well upon his inside, that his bowels became perfectly in tune, and in a few hours were harmoniously becalmed.

Farinelli, the famous singer, was sent for to Madrid to try the effect of his magical voice on the king of Spain. His Majesty was absorbed in the deepest melancholy; nothing could excite an emotion in him; he lived in a state of total oblivion of life; he sat in a darkened chamber, entirely given up to the most distressing kind of madness. The physicians at first ordered Farinelli to sing in an outer room; and for the first day or two this was done, without produc-

ing any effect on the royal patient. At length it was observed, that the king, awakening from his stupor, seemed to listen; on the next day tears were seen starting from his eyes: the day after he ordered the door of his chamber to be left open, and at length the perturbed spirit entirely left our modern Saul, and the -medicinal- music of Farinelli effected what medicine itself had denied.

"After food," says Sir William Jones,[121] "when the operations of digestion and absorption gives so much employment to the vessels, that a temporary state of mental repose, especially in hot climates, must be found essential to health, it seems reasonable to believe that a few agreeable airs, either heard or played without effort, must have all the good effects of sleep, and none of its disadvantages; putting, as Milton says, '-the soul in tune-' for any subsequent ex-

ertion; an experiment often made by myself. I have been assured by a credible witness, that two wild antelopes often used to come from their woods to the place where a more savage beast, Serajuddaulah, entertained himself with concerts, and that they listened to the strains with the appearance of pleasure, till the monster, in whose soul there was no music, shot one of them to display his archery." A learned native told Sir William Jones that he had frequently seen the most venomous snakes leave their holes upon hearing tunes on a flute, which, as he supposed, gave them peculiar delight.

Of the surprising effects of music, the two following instances, with which we shall close these remarks, are related in the history of the Royal Academy of Society of Paris.

A famous musician, and great composer was taken ill of a fever, which assumed the contin-

ued form, with a gradual increase of the symptoms. On the second day he fell into a very violent delirium, almost constantly accompanied by cries, tears, terrors, and a perpetual watchfulness. The third day of his delirium one of those natural instincts, which make, as it is said, sick animals seek out for the herbs that are proper to their case, set him upon desiring earnestly to hear a little concert in his chamber. His physician could hardly be prevailed upon to consent to it. On hearing the first modulations, the air of his countenance became serene, his eyes sparkled with a joyful alacrity, his convulsions absolutely ceased, he shed tears of pleasure, and was then possessed for music with a sensibility he never before had, nor after, when he was recovered. He had no fever during the whole concert, but, when it was over, he relapsed into his former condition.

The fever and delirium were always suspended during the concert, and music was become so necessary to the patient, that at night he obliged a female relation who sometimes sat up with him, to sing and even to dance, and who, being much afflicted, was put to great difficulty to gratify him. One night, among others, he had none but his nurse to attend him, who could sing nothing better than some wretched country ballads. He was satisfied to put up with that, and he even found some benefit from it. At last ten days of music cured him entirely, without other assistance than of being let blood in the foot, which was the second bleeding that was prescribed for him, and was followed by a copious evacuation.

This account was communicated to the Academy by M. Dodart, who had it well authenticated.

The second instance of the extraordinary ef-

fect of music is related of a dancing-master of Alais, in the province of Languedoc. Being once over-fatigued in Carnival time by the exercise of his profession, he was seized with a violent fever, and on the fourth or fifth day, fell into a lethargy, which continued upon him for a considerable time. On recovering he was attacked with a furious and mute delirium, wherein he made continual efforts to jump out of bed, threatened, with a shaking head and angry countenance, those who attended him, and even all that were present; and he besides obstinately refused, though without speaking a word, all the remedies that were presented to him. One of the assistants bethought himself that music perhaps might compose a disordered imagination. He accordingly proposed it to his physician, who did not disapprove the thought, but feared with good reason the ridicule of the ex-

ecution which might still have been infinitely greater, if the patient should happen to die under the operation of such a remedy.

A friend of the dancing master, who seemed to disregard the caution of the physician, and who could play on the violin, seeing that of the patient hanging up in the chamber, laid hold of it, and played directly for him the air most familiar to him. He was cried out against more than the patient who lay in bed, confined in a straight jacket; and some were ready to make him desist; when the patient, immediately sitting up as a man agreeably surprised, attempted to caper with his arms in unison with the music; and on his arms being held, he evinced, by the motion of his head, the pleasure he felt. Sensible, however, of the effects of the violin, he was suffered by degrees to yield to the movement he was desirous to perform,–when, strange

as it may appear, his furious fits abated. In short, in the space of a quarter of an hour, the patient fell into a profound sleep, and a salutary crisis in the interim rescued him from all danger.

FOOTNOTES:

[116] Dr. Burney's History of Music.

[117] It has been asserted by several moderns, that deaf people can hear best in a great noise; perhaps to prove that Greek noise could do nothing which the modern cannot operate as effectually: and Dr. Willis in particular tells us of a lady who could hear only while a drum was beating, in so much that her husband, the account says, hired a drummer as her servant, in order to enjoy the pleasures of her conversation.

[118] Many of the ancients speak of music as

a recipe for every kind of malady, and it is probable that the Latin was -praecinere-, to charm away pain, -incantare- to enchant, and our own word -incantation-, came from the medical use of song.

[119] M. Burette, with Dr. Mead, Baglivi, and all the learned of their time throughout Europe, seem to have entertained no doubt of this fact, which, however, philosophical and curious enquirers have since found to be built upon fraud and fallacy. Vide Serrao, -della Tarantula o vero falangio di Puglia.-

[120] Pope's translation of the Iliad, Book 1.

[121] See a curious Dissertation on the musical modes of the Hindoos by Sir W. Jones.

XV. PRESAGES, PRODIGES, PRESENTIMENTS, ETC.

The common opinion of comets being the presages of evil is an old pagan superstition, introduced and entertained among Christians by their prejudice for antiquity; and which Mr. Bayle says is a remnant of pagan superstition, conveyed from father to son, ever since the first conver-

sion from paganism; as well because it has taken deep root in the minds of men, as because Christians, generally speaking, are as far gone in the folly of finding presages in every thing, as infidels themselves. It may be easily conceived how the pagans might be brought stedfastly to believe that comets, eclipses, and thunderstorms, were the forerunners of calamities, when man's strong inclination for the marvellous is considered, and his insatiable curiosity for prying into future events, or what is to come to pass. This desire of peeping into futurity, as has already been shown, has given birth to a thousand different kinds of divination, all alike whimsical and impertinent, which in the hands of the more expert and cunning have been made most important and mysterious tools. When any one has been rogue enough to think of making a penny of the simplicity of his neighbours, and

has had the ingenuity to invent something to amuse, the pretended faculty of foretelling things to come, has always been one of the readiest projects. From hence always the assumption of judiciary astrology. Those who first began to consult the motions of the heavens, had no other design in view, than the enriching their minds with so noble a knowledge; and as they had their genius bent on the pursuit of useful knowledge, they never dreamed of converting astrology or a knowledge of the stars to the purpose of picking the pockets of the credulous and ignorant, of whose blind side advantage was taken by these sideral sages to turn them to account by making them believe that the doctrine of the stars comprehended the knowledge of all things that were, or are, or ever shall be; so that every one, for his money, might come to them and have their fortune told.

The better to gull the world, the Star-gazers assert that the heavens are the book in which God has written the destiny of all things; and that it is only necessary to learn to read this book, which is simply the construction of the stars, to be able to know the whole history of what is to come to pass. Very learned men, Origen and Plotinus among the rest, were let into the secret, and grew so fond of it, that the former,[122] willing to support his opinion by something very solid, catches at the authority of an Apocryphal book, ascribed to the patriarch Joseph, where Jacob is introduced speaking to his twelve sons: "I have read in the register of heaven what shall happen to you and your children."[123] But comets were the staple commodity that turned principally to account. In compliance, however, with the impressions of fear which the strangeness and ex-

cessive length of these stars made upon mankind, the Astrologers did not hesitate to pronounce them of a malign tendency; and the more so when they found they had, by this means, made themselves in some degree necessary, in consequence of the impatient applications that were made to them as from the mouth of an oracle, what particular disaster such and such a comet portended.

Eclipses furnished more frequent occasions for the exercise of their talent. From this worthy precedent of Judicial Astrology, others took the hint and invented new modes of divination, such as Geomancy, Chiromancy, Onomancy, and the like; till the world by degrees became so overrun with superstition, that the least trifle was converted into a presage or presentiment; and the more so when this kind of knowledge became the business of religion; and when

the substance of divine worship consisted in the ordinances of Augurs who, to make themselves necessary in the world, were obliged to keep up and quicken men's apprehensions of the wrath of God, took special care to cultivate comets, and bring it into a proverb, that "so many comets so many calamities." They knew, as Livy expresses it, that it was best to fish in troubled waters, where, speaking of a contagious distemper, which, from the country villages, spread over the city, occasioned by an extraordinary drought in the year of Rome 326, he observes how, at last, it infected the mind,[124] by the management of those who lived in the superstition of the people; so that nothing was to be seen or heard except some new fangled ceremony or other in every corner. "The devil," as Bayle says, "who had a hopeful game on't, and saw superstition the surest way to get him-

self worshipped under the name of the false gods, in a hundred various ways, all criminal and abominable in the sight of the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, never failed, on the appearance of any rare meteor, or uncommon star, to exert his imposing arts, and make idolaters believe, they were the signs of divine wrath, and that they were all undone unless they appeased their gods by sacrifices of men and brute beasts."

Politicians have also lent a helping hand to give presages a reputation, as an excellent scheme, either to intimidate the people, or to raise their drooping spirits. Had the Roman soldiers been free thinkers, Drusus, the son of Tiberius, had not been so fortunate as to quell a desperate mutiny among the legions of Pannonia, who utterly refused to obey his commands; but an eclipse, which critically intervened, broke their

refractory spirits to such a degree, that Drusus, who managed their panic fear with great dexterity and address, did what he liked with them.

An eclipse of the moon put the army of Alexander the Great into such a consternation, some days before the battle of Arbela, that the soldiers, under the impression that heaven was against them, were very reluctant to advance; and their devotion turning to downright disobedience, Alexander commanded the Egyptian astrologers, who were the deepest versed in the mystery of the stars, to give their opinions of this eclipse in the presence of all the officers of his army. Without giving themselves much trouble to explain the physical cause which it was their interest to conceal from the people, the wise men declared that the sun was on the side of the Grecians, and the moon for the Persians; and that this planet was never in an

eclipse, but it threatened them with some mighty disaster: of this they quoted several ancient examples among the kings of Persia, who, after an eclipse, had always found their gods unpropitious in the day of battle. "Nothing," says Quintus Curtius,[125] "is so effectual as superstition for keeping the vulgar under. Be they ever so unruly and inconstant, if once their minds are possessed with the vain visions of religion, they are all obedience to the soothsayer, whatever becomes of the general." The answer of the Egyptian astrologers being circulated among the soldiers, restored their confidence and their courage.

On another occasion Alexander, just before he passed the river Granicus, observing the circumstance of time, which was the month Desius, reckoned unfortunate to the Macedonians from all antiquity, it made the soldiers melancholy; he immediately ordered this dangerous

month to be called by the name of that which preceded it, well knowing what power and influence vain religious scruples have over little and ignorant minds. He sent private orders to Aristander his chief soothsayer, just offering up a sacrifice for a happy passage, to write on the liver of the victim with a liquor prepared for that purpose, that the gods had "granted the victory to Alexander." The notice of this miracle filled the men with invincible ardour; and now they rent the air with acclamations, exclaiming that the day was their own, since the gods had vouchsafed them such plain demonstrations of their favour. The history, indeed, of this mighty conqueror, affords more such examples of artifice, though he always affected to conquer by mere dint of bravery. But what is still more extraordinary, this very hero, who palmed so often such tricks upon others, was

himself caught in his turn, as being well as exceedingly superstitious by fits. We say nothing of Themistocles,[126] who, in the war between Xerxes and the Athenians, despairing to prevail upon his countrymen by force of reasoning to quit their city, and betake themselves to sea, set all the engines of religion to work; forged oracles, and procured the priests to circulate among the people, that Minerva had fled from Athens, and had taken the way which led to the port. Philip of Macedon, whose talent lay in conquering his enemies by good intelligence, purchased at any price, had as many oracles at command as he pleased; and hence Demosthenes justly suspecting too good an understanding between Philip and the Delphian priestess, rallied her with so much acrimony upon her partiality to that prince. It is equally obvious how the same reasons of state, which

kept up the popular superstition for other prodigies, should take care to encourage it with regard to comets and other celestial appearances.

Panegyrists have also done their parts to promote the superstition of presages, as well as the flattering of poets and orators. When a hero is to be found and extolled, they exclaim, that -all nature adores him; that she exerts her utmost powers to serve him; that she mourns at his misfortunes, promises him long before hand to the world; and when the world, by its sins, is unworthy to possess him longer, heaven, which calls him home, hangs out new lights, etc.- With this hyperbole M. Balzac regaled Cardinal Richelieu, adding, that -to form such a minister, universal nature was on the stretch; God gives him first by promise, and makes him the expectation of ages-. For this he was attacked by the critics, but he defended himself; alleging, that

other panegyrics had gone some notes higher: he, for example, among the ancients, who said of certain great souls that -all the orders of heaven were called together to fancy a fine destiny for them-, and that illustrious nation who wrote that -the eternal mind was wrapt in deep contemplation, and big with the vast design, when it conceived such a genius as Cardinal Hippolito d'Este-. Why could not this same writer have thought of one example more, such as that of the priest who told the Emperor Constantine that -divine Providence, not content with qualifying him for the empire of the world, had formed virtues in his soul, which should entitle him to reign in heaven with his only son-. Thus have flatterers seized the most surprising natural effects to enhance their hero's glory, and make their court to great men. The poets of the time of Augustus vied with each other in

persuading the world that the murder of Julius Caesar was the cause of all the prodigies that followed. Horace, for instance, in one of his odes, attempts to prove that the overflowings of rivers were reckoned among bad presages; and pretends that the Tiber had not committed all those ravages, but in complaisance to his wife Ilia, who was bent on the death of his kinsman Caesar; and that all the other calamities which subsequently afflicted or threatened the Roman empire, were the consequences of his assassination. If Virgil may be credited,[127] the sun was so troubled at the death of Caesar that it went into deep mourning, and so obscured his beams, that the world was alarmed lest it never should appear again. In the mean time, no sooner was the comet observed, which followed this murder, than another set of flatterers pretended that it was Caesar's soul received

into the order of the Gods; and they dedicated a temple[128] to the comet, and set up the image of Caesar with a star on his forehead.

It appears from the sermons of the ancient fathers, that the Christians of that time believed they gave great relief to the moon in an eclipse, by raising hideous shouts to the skies, which they imagined recovered her out of her fainting fit, and without which she must inevitably have expired. St. Ambrose, the author of the 215th sermon -de tempore-, bound up with those of St. Austin, and St. Eloy, Bishop of Noyon, declaim particularly against this abuse. It appears also from the Homilies of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Austin, and others, that the Christians of their days drew several kinds of presages from persons sneezing at critical times; from meeting a cat, a dog, or an ill-looking (squinting) woman, a maiden, one blind of an

eye, or a cripple; on being caught by the cloak on stepping out of a door, or from a sudden catch in one's joint or limb.

St. Eloy tells his people plainly, that whoever pays attention to what he meets at his first going out or coming in, or to any particular voice, or to the chirping of a bird, is so far a Pagan. Indeed, all these, and innumerable others of the same description of superstitious among Christians, are remnants of ancient paganism; as they have been denounced by the censures of popes, provincial councils, synodical decrees, and other grave authorities. And, though there were not such a cloud of witnesses, there would be no difficulty in proving the disease of pagan origin. For, independent of those who preached the gospel of our Saviour, having never promulgated such notions, we learn from several ancient authorities, that the Gen-

tiles had all these superstitions in the highest regard. It was one general opinion among them, that the eclipses of the moon were the consequence of certain magic words by which sorcerers could wrench her from the skies, and drag her near enough the earth to cast a frothy spittle on their herbs–one of the principal ingredients in their incantations. To rescue the moon from the supposed torture she was in, and to frustrate the charm, it was necessary to prevent her from hearing the magic words, by drowning in noise and hideous outcries, for which purpose the people used to assemble during an eclipse of the moon with -rough- music, such as frying pans, brazen vessels, old tin kettles, etc. According to Pietro della Voile, the Persians keep up the same ridiculous ceremony to this day. It is likewise, according to Tavernier, observed in the kingdom of Tunquin,

where they imagine the moon to be, at that time, struggling with a dragon. It is to the same source that we owe the imaginary raging heat of the dog-star–the pretended presages of several evils ascribed to eclipses, and all the allusions of astrology.

In a treatise written by Abogard, Bishop of Lyons, in 833, composed to undeceive a world of people, who were persuaded that there were enchanters who could command thunder, and hail, and tempest, to destroy the fruits of the earth; and that they drove a great trade by this mystery with the people of a certain country called Magonia, who came once a year, sailing in large fleets through the air, to freight with the blighted corn, for which they paid down ready money to the enchanters. So little was this matter doubted, that one day the bishop had enough to do to save three men and a woman

from being stoned to death, the people insisting they had just fallen overboard from one of these aerial ships.

We do not here examine whether, in those days, the people literally were more superstitious and credulous than in the days of paganism. It is enough to say, that they were of very easy belief; and hence men began to write their histories in the style of romance, mixing up a thousand fables with the deeds of great men, such as Roland, nephew to Charlemagne; which so suited the taste of the age, that no book would afterwards go down in any other style–witness, for instance, the Manual of Devotions by James de Voragine, archbishop of Genoa, composed towards the latter end of the thirteenth century; and in which Melchior Canus, a learned Spanish bishop, is so scandalized in his eleventh book of Common Places.

Another doctor of divinity,[129] speaking of the depraved state of the times, says, ”It was the error, or rather folly, of some of the ancients, to think, that in writing the actions of illustrious men, the style must sink, unless they mixed up with it the ornaments, for so they called them, of poetical fiction, or something of this sort; and, consequently, thus blended truth with fable.” This being the prevailing fashion of the times, we are inclined to believe, that in the histories of the crusades, many apocryphal subjects are introduced, which ought, consequently, to be read -cum grano salis-. This is decidedly the opinion of Pere Maimbourg,[130] who, after the relation of the battle of Iconium, won by Frederick of Barbarossa, 1190, says, ”What was chiefly wonderful after this battle, was the conqueror’s sustaining little or no loss, which most people ascribed to the particular

protection of St. Victor and St. George, names oftenest invoked in the Christian army, which many of them said they saw engaging at the head of the squadrons. Whether in reality there might be something in it extraordinary, which has often happened, as the Scriptures inform us; or whether, by often hearing of celestial squadrons appearing at the battle of Antioch in the first crusade, warm imaginations possessed with the belief, and penetrated with these ideas, formed new apparitions of their own, but sure it is, that one Louie Helfenstein, a gentleman of reputation, and far from a visionary, affirmed to the emperor, on his oath, and on the vow of a pilgrim devoted to the holy sepulchre and the crusade, that -he often saw St. George charge at the head of the squadrons, and put the enemy to flight-; which was afterwards confirmed by the Turks themselves, owning that they saw

some troops in white charge in the first ranks in the Christian army, though there were really none of that livery. No one, I know, is bound (continues P. Maimbourg) to believe visions of this kind, subject for the most part to notorious illusion: but I know too, that an historian is not of his own authority, to reject them, especially when supported by such remarkable testimony.

"And though he be at liberty to believe or not, yet he has no regret, by suppressing them, to deprive the reader of his liberty, when he meets with passages of this kind, of judging as he thinks fit." This reflection (says Bayle) from so celebrated an historian, not suspected of favouring the Hugonot incredulity, is a strong presumption on my side.

The abuse of presentiments has been carried to the very Scriptures. We are told, that the

manner of Tamerlane giving his blessing to his two sons, by bowing down the head of the elder, and chucking the youngest under the chin, was a presage of the elevation of the latter in prejudice to the former, was grounded on the 48th chapter of Genesis, where Jacob is represented laying his right hand on the head of the younger, forseeing by inspiration that he would be the greater of the two. Meanwhile there is a difference between the two benedictions. The Tartar, wholly destitute of the knowledge of future events, did not diversify the motion of his hands, on purpose to establish a presage; and God never vouchsafing this knowledge to infidels, did not guide his hands in a particular manner to form a presage of what should befal his children;–whereas Jacob, on the contrary, filled with the spirit of prophecy, whereby he saw the fortunes of his children, directed his

words and actions according to this knowledge; by which means both became presages.

Presages, presentiments, and prodigies, might be multiplied ad infinitum. Whoever reads the Roman historians will be surprised at their number, and which frequently filled the people with the most dreadful apprehensions. It must be confessed, that some of these seem altogether supernatural; while much the greater part only consist of some of the uncommon productions of nature, which superstition always attributed to a superior cause, and represented as the prognostications of some impending misfortunes. Of this class may be reckoned the appearance of two suns;[131] the nights illuminated by rays of light; the views of fighting armies; swords and spears darting through the air; showers of milk, of blood, of stones, of ashes, or of fire; and the birth of monsters, of children, or of beasts

who had two heads; or of infants who had some feature resembling those of the brute creation. These were all dreadful prodigies which filled the people with inexpressible astonishment, and the whole Roman empire with an extreme perplexity; and whatever unhappy event followed, repentance was sure to be either caused or predicted by them.

FOOTNOTES:

[122] Euseb. Praep. Evang. l. 6. c. 9.

[123] Legi in tabulis coeli quaecunque contingent vobis et Feliis vestris.

[124] Nec corpora modo affecta tabo, sed animos quoque multiplex religio, et pleraque externa invasit, novos ritus sacrificando vaticinandoque, inferentibus in domos, quibus quaestui sunt capti superstitione animi. L. 4, dec. 1.

[125] Tacit, Annal. lib. 1, et ib. 4, cap. 10.

[126] Plutarch in his life.

[127] Georg. l. 1.

[128] Suetonius in vita Caesaris.

[129] Petseus, in Galfredo Monimetensi.

[130] Hist. Crusade, l. 5.

[131] Nothing is more easy than to account for these productions, which have no relation to any events, no more than comets, that may happen to follow them. The appearance of two suns has frequently happened in England, as well as in other places, and is only caused by the clouds being placed in such a situation as to reflect the image of that luminary; nocturnal fires, inflamed spears, fighting armies, were no more than what we call aurora borealis, northern lights, or inflamed vapours floating in the air; showers of stones, of ashes, or of fire, were no other than the effects of the eruptions of some volcano at a considerable distance. Showers of milk were only caused by some quality in the air condensing and giving a whitish colour to the water, etc.

XVI. PHENOMENA OF METEORS, OPTIC DELUSIONS, SPECTRA, ETC.

The meteors known to the ancients were called [Greek: Lampdes Pithoi] Bolides, Faces, Globi, etc. from particular differences in their shape and appearance, and sometimes under the general term of comets. In the Philosophical Transactions, they are called, indiscriminately, fire-

balls, or fiery meteors; and names of similar import have been applied to them in the different languages of Europe. The most material circumstances observed of such meteors may be brought under the following heads: 1. Their general appearance. 2. Their path. 3. Their shape or figure. 4. Their light and colour. 5. Their height. 6. The noise with which they are accompanied. 7. Their fire. 8. Duration, 9. Their velocity. Under these different heads meteors have been investigated by the scrutinizing of philosophy, and many superstitious notions, long entertained concerning them, entirely exploded. Meteoric phenomena, it has been demonstrated, all proceed from one common cause–irregularity in the density of the atmosphere. When the atmospheric fluid is homogenous and of equal density, the rays of light pass without obstruction or alteration in their

shape or direction; but when they enter from a rarer into a denser medium, they are refracted or bent out of their course; and this with greater or less effect according to the different degrees of density in the media, or the deviation of the ray from the perpendicular. If the second medium be very dense in proportion, the ray will be both refracted and reflected; and the object from which it proceeds, will assume a variety of grotesque and extraordinary shapes, and it will sometimes appear as in a reflection from a concave mirror, dilated in size, and changed in situation.

The following striking effects are known to proceed from this simple cause.

The first is the mirage, seen in the desert of Africa. M. Monge, a member of the National Institute, accompanied the French army into Egypt. In the desert, between Alexandria and Cairo, the mirage of the blue sky was inverted,

and so mingled with the sand below, as to impart to the desolate and arid wilderness an appearance of the most rich and beautiful country. They saw, in all directions, green islands, surrounded with extensive lakes of pure and transparent water. Nothing could be conceived more lovely and picturesque than this landscape. On the tranquil surface of the lakes, the trees and houses, with which the islands were covered, were strongly reflected with vivid hues, and the party hastened forward to enjoy the cool refreshments of shade and stream, which these populous villages preferred to them. When they arrived, the lake, on whose bosom they floated, the trees, among whose foliage they were embowered, and the people who stood on the shore inviting their approach, had all vanished, and nothing remained but an uniform and irksome desert of sand and sky, with a few naked

huts and ragged shrubs. Had they not been undeceived by their nearer approach, there was not a man in the French army who would not have sworn, that the visionary trees and lakes had a real existence in the midst of the desert.

The same appearance precisely was observed by Dr. Clarke at Raschid, or Rosetta. The city seemed surrounded by a beautiful sheet of water, and so certain was his Greek interpreter, who was acquainted with the country, of this fact, that he was quite indignant at an Arab, who attempted to explain to him, that it was a mere optical delusion. At length, they reached Rosetta in about two hours, without meeting any water; and, on looking back on the sand they had just crossed, it seemed to them, as if they had just waded through a vast blue lake.

A similar deception takes place in northern climates. Cities, battlements, houses, and all

the accompaniments of populous places, are seen in desolate regions, where life goes out, and where human foot has never trod. When approached they vanish, and nothing remains but a rugged rock, or a misshapen iceberg.

Captain Scoresby, in his voyage to the arctic regions, on the coast of East Greenland, constantly saw those visionary cities, and gives some highly curious plates of the appearances they presented. They resembled the real cities seen on the coast of Holland, where towers, and battlements, and spires, ”bosomed high in tufted trees,” rise on the level horizon, and are seen floating on the surface of the sea. Among the optic deceptions noticed by Captain Scoresby, was one of a very singular nature. His ship had been separated by the ice, from that of his father for some time; and he was looking for her every day, with great anxiety. At length, one

evening, to his utter astonishment, he saw her suspended in the air in an inverted position, traced on the horizon in the clearest colours, and with the most distinct and perfect representation. He sailed in the direction in which he saw this visionary phenomenon, and actually found his father's vessel by its indication. He was divided from him by immense masses of icebergs, and at such a distance that it was quite impossible to have seen the ship in her actual situation, or seen her at all, if her spectrum, or image, had not been thus raised several degrees above the horizon into the sky, by this most extraordinary refraction, in the same manner as the sun is often seen, after he is known to have set, and actually sunk far below the line of direct vision.

The -Fata Morgana- are further illustrations of this optic delusion. This phenomenon is seen

at the Pharo of Messina, in Sicily, under certain circumstances. The spectator must stand with his back to the east, on an elevated place behind the city, commanding a view of the bay, and having the mountains, like a wall, opposite to him, to darken the back ground of the picture; no wind must be abroad to ruffle the surface of the sea; and the waters must be pressed up by currents, as they sometimes are, to a considerable height in the middle of the strait, and present a slight convex surface. When all these circumstances occur, as soon as the sun rises over the heights of the Calabrian shore, and makes an angle of 45 degrees with the horizon, all the objects on the shore at Reggio are transferred to the middle of the strait, and seen distinctly on the surface of the water, forming an immoveable landscape of rocks, trees, and houses, and a moveable one of men, horses,

and cattle; these are formed into a thousand separate compartments, presenting most beautiful and ever varying pictures of animate and inanimate nature, on the swelling surface of the water, broken by the currents, present separate plates of convex mirrors to reflect them; they then as suddenly disappear, as the broad aquatic mirror of the current passes on.

Sometimes the atmosphere is so dense that the objects are seen, like Captain Scoresby's ship, snatched up into the regions of the air, thirty or forty feet above the level of the sea; and in cloudy weather, nearer to the surface, bordered with vivid prismatic colours. Sometimes colonades of temples and churches, with cross-crowned spires, are all represented as floating on the sea, and by a sudden change of representation, the pillars are curved into arcades, and the crosses are bent into crescents, and all

the edifices of the floating city undergo the most extraordinary and fantastic mutations. All these images are so distinct, and produce objects seemingly as palpable as they are visible, as sensible to touch as to sight, that the people of the country are firmly persuaded of their reality. They consider the edifices as the enchanted palaces of the fairy Morgana, and the moving objects as living things which inhabit them. Whenever the optic phenomenon occurs, they meet together in crowds, with an intense curiosity, mixed with awe and apprehension, which is not removed by an acquaintance with those natural causes, by which Mr. Swinburn and other foreign travellers, who have witnessed the scene, are able to account for it.

The lakes of Ireland are equally susceptible of producing those vivid delusions, and the imagination of the people, as lively as that of

the Sicilians, clothes them with an equal reality. There is scarcely a loch in that country, in which the remains of cities have not been at various times discovered; and many men have been met with who would solemnly swear they saw, and who no doubt did see, representations of them in certain states of the atmosphere. The most celebrated is that which occurs on the lake of Killarney. This romantic sheet of water is bounded on one side by a semi-circle of rugged mountains, and on the other by a flat morass, and the vapour generated in the mass, and broken by the mountains, continually represent the most fantastic objects; and often those on shore are transferred to the water, like the Fata Morgana.

Many of the rocks are distinguished for their marked and lengthened echoes, and the structure, which in acoustics reflects sounds to the

ear, from a point from whence they did not come, reflects images on the eye, from a place very different from where the objects stood which produced them. Frequently men riding along shore, are seen as if they were moving across the lake, and this has given rise to the story of O'Donougho. This celebrated chieftain was, according to the tradition of the country, endued with the gift of magic; and, on one occasion, his lady requested him to change his shape, that she might see a proof of it. He complied, on condition that she would not be terrified, as such an effect on her must prove fatal to him. Her mind failed her, however, in the experiment, and at the sight of some horrible figure he assumed, she shrieked, and he disappeared through the window of his castle, which overhung the lake. From that time he continues an enchanted being, condemned to ride a horse,

shod with silver, over the surface of the lake, till his horse's shoes are worn out. On every May morning he is visible, and crowds assemble on the shore to see him. Many affirm they have seen him; and one person relates many particulars of his apparition, that the deception must have proceeded from some real object, a man riding along shore, and transferred to the middle of the water, by the optic delusion of the Fata Morgana.

But perhaps the most wonderful, and apparently preternatural effect arising from this cause, is the -spectre of the Hartz Mountains- in Hanover. There is one particular hill, called the Brocken, in which he appears, terrifying the credulous, and gratifying the curious to a very high degree. The most distinct and interesting account is given by Mr. Hawe, who himself was a witness to it. He had climbed to the

top of the mountain thirty times, and had been disappointed, but he persevered, and was at length highly gratified. The sun rose about four o'clock in a serene sky, free from clouds, and its rays passed without obstruction, over another mountain, called the Heinschoe. About a quarter past five he looked round to see if the sky was clear, and if there was any chance of his witnessing what he so ardently wished, when suddenly he saw the Achtermanshoe, a human figure of monstrous size turned towards him, and glaring at him. While gazing on this gigantic spectre with wonder mixed with an irrepressible feeling of awe and apprehension, a sudden gust of wind nearly carried off his own hat, and he clapped his hand to his head to detain it, when to his great delight the colossal spectre did the same. He then changed his body into a variety of attitudes, all which the

figure exactly imitated, but at length suddenly vanished without any apparent cause, and again as suddenly appeared. He called the landlord of the inn, who had accompanied him, to stand beside him, and in a little time two correspondent figures, of dilated size, appeared on the opposite mountain. They saluted them in various ways by different movements of their bodies, all which the giants returned with perfect politeness, and then vanished. A traveller now joined Mr. Hawe and the innkeeper, and they kept steadily looking for their aerial friends, when they suddenly appeared again three in number, who all performed exactly the same movements as their correspondent spectators. Having continued thus for some time, appearing and disappearing alternately, sometimes faintly, and sometimes more distinct, they at length faded away not again to return. They proved, how-

ever, that the preternatural spectre, which had so long filled the country with awe and terror, was no unreal being, still less an existence whose appearance suspended the ordinary laws of God and Nature; that, on the contrary, it was the simple production of a common cause, exhibited in an unusual manner, but as regular an effect, and as easy to be accounted for, as the reflection of a face in a looking glass.

This constitution of the atmosphere, and its capability of dilating objects, and altering their position by reflection and refraction, will easily account for many phenomena which have been considered miraculous and preternatural in early ages, by the ignorant; and in our own, by the weak and superstitious. Such was probably the origin of the crosses seen by Constantine and Constantius in the first ages of Christianity, and such was that of the cross which

appeared in the sky in France, to which so many bore attestation. A large cross of wood, painted red, had been erected beside the church, as a part of the ceremony they were performing. In the winter, when the air is most frequently condensed by cold, and its different strata of various degrees of tenacity, on a clear evening after rain, when particles of humidity, still floating in the air gives it greater power of reflection and refraction, when the sun was setting, and his horizontal beams found most favourable to produce meteoric phenomena, the spectrum of this wooden cross was cast on the concave surface of some atmospheric mirror, and so reflected back to the eyes of the spectators from an opposite place, retaining exactly the same shape and proportions, but dilated in size, and changed in position; and it was moreover tinged with red, the very colour of the object of which it was the

reflected image. This delusive appearance continued till the sun was so far sunk below the horizon, as to afford no more light to illumine the object, and the image ceased when the rays were no longer distinctly reflected.

XVII. ELUCIDATION OF SOME ANCIENT PRODIGIES.

Many of the prodigies recorded by the ancients, admit of a natural explanation; and an attentive examination will show that a small number of causes, which may be discerned and developed, will serve for the explanation of nearly the whole of them. There are two reasons for our believing accounts of prodigies:–

1. The number and agreement of these ac-

counts, and the confidence to which the observers and witnesses are entitled.

2. The possibility of dissipating what is wonderful, by ascertaining any one of the principal causes which might have given to a natural fact a tinge of the marvellous.

Now, as regards the first reason, the ancients have recorded various occurrences: for instance, a shower of quicksilver at Rome is mentioned by Dion Cassius, in the year 197 of our era, and a similar event is related under the reign of Aurelian. If we attend to phenomena taking place in our time, such as a shower of blood, tremendous hail stones weighing a pound each, and containing a stone within them; showers of frogs, and other almost unaccountable occurrences, we must consign them to, "the annals in which science has inserted the facts, she has recognized as such, without as

yet pretending to explain them."

Respecting the second reason, the deceptive appearance which nature sometimes assumes, the exaggeration, almost unavoidable, by partially informed observers, of the details of a phenomenon, or its duration; improper, ill-understood, or badly translated expressions, figurative language, and a practical style; erroneous explanations of emblematical representations; apologues and allegories adopted as real facts. Such are the causes, which, singly or together, have frequently swollen with prodigious fictions the page of history; and it is by carefully removing this envelope, that elucidations must be sought of what has hitherto been improperly and disdainfully rejected. A few examples will illustrate these several positions.

The river Adonis being impregnated, during certain seasons, with volumes of dust raised

from the red soil of that part of Mount Libanus near which it flows, gave rise to the fable of the periodical effusion of the blood of Adonis. There is a rock near the Island of Corfu, which bears the resemblance of a ship under sail: the ancients adapted the story to the phenomenon, and recognised in it the Phenician ship, in which Ulysses returned to his country, converted into stone by Neptune, for having carried away the slayer of his son Polyphemus. A more extensive acquaintance with the ocean, has shown that this appearance is not unique; a similar one on the coast of Patagonia, has more than once deceived both French and English navigators; and rock Dunder, in the West Indies, bears a resemblance, at a distance equally illusive. There is another recorded by Captain Hardy, in his recent travels in Mexico, near the shore of California; and the "story of the fly-

ing Dutchman," is founded on a similar appearance at the Cape of Good Hope, connected with a tradition which has been long current there among the Dutch colonists. Another instance is afforded by the chimaera, the solution of which enigma, as given by Ovid, is so fully substantiated by the very intelligent British officer who surveyed the Caramania a few years since. Scylla the sea monster, which devoured six of the rowers of Ulysses, M. Salverte, a recent compiler on the marvellous, is tempted to regard as an overgrown polypus magnified by the optical power of poetry, though we are disposed to give the credit to an alligator, or its mate, a crocodile; and this occurrence is not so fictitiously represented, as it is supposed to be.

MAGICAL PRETENSIONS OF CERTAIN HERBS, ETC.

In the enumeration of plants possessing magical properties, Pliny mentions those which, according to Pythagoras, have the property of concealing water. Elsewhere, without having recourse to magic, he assigns to hemp an analogous quality. According to him, the juice of this

plant poured into water becomes suddenly inspissated and congealed. It is probable enough, that he indicated a species of mallow, the hemp-leaved marsh-mallow, of which the mucilaginous juice produces this effect to a certain point, and an effect which may also be obtained from every vegetable as rich in mucilage.

Of vegetable productions, many produce intoxicating effects, such as berries of the nightshade,[132] scammony, and various species of fungi. These unquestionably have been made subservient to demonological purposes, which, with the ignorant, have passed off for supernatural agency. The priests, to whom the little comparative learning of the dark ages attached, knew well how to impose upon the credulous: but imposition was not always their object; an extent of benevolence prevailed which contemplated the relief of their fellow creatures afflicted

with sickness.

It was maintained by the Egyptians that, besides the gods, there were many demons which communicated with mortals, and which were often rendered visible by certain ceremonies and songs; that genii exercised an habitual and powerful influence over every particle of matter; that thirty-six of these beings presided over the various members of the human body; and thus, by magical incantations, it might be strengthened, or debilitated, afflicted with, or delivered from disease. Thus, in every case of sickness, the spirit presiding over the afflicted part, was first duly invoked. But the magicians did not trust solely to their vain invocations; they were well acquainted with the virtues of certain herbs, which they wisely employed in their attempts at healing. These herbs were greatly esteemed: such, for instance, as the -cynocephalia-, or, as

the Egyptians themselves termed the -asyrites-,[133] which was used as a preventive against witchcraft; and the nepenthes which Helen presented in a potion to Menelaus, and which was believed to be powerful in banishing sadness, and in restoring the mind to its accustomed, or even to greater, cheerfulness, were of Egyptian growth. But whatever may be the virtues of such herbs, they were used rather for their magical, than for their medicinal qualities; every cure was cunningly ascribed to the presiding demons, with which not a few boasted that they were, by means of their art, intimately connected.

There can be no question, as attested by the earliest records, that the ancients were in possession of many potent remedies. Melampus of Argos, the most ancient Greek physician with whom we are acquainted, is reputed to have

cured one of the Argonauts of barrenness, by exhibiting the rust of iron dissolved in wine, for the space of ten days. The same physician used hellebore as a purgative on the daughters of King Proteus, who were labouring under hypochondriasis or melancholy. Bleeding was also a remedy of very early origin, and said to have been first suggested by the hypopotamus or sea horse, which at a certain time of the year was observed to cast itself on the sea shore, and to wound itself among the rocks or stones, to relieve its plethora. Podalerius, on his return from the Trojan war, cured the daughter of Damaethus, who had fallen from a height, by bleeding her in both arms. Opium, the concrete juice of the poppy, was known in the earliest ages; and probably it was opium that Helen mixed with wine, and gave to the guests of Menelaus, under the expressive name of -

Nepenthe-, to drown their cares, and encrease their hilarity. This conjecture, in a considerable degree, is supported from the fact, that Homer's Nepenthe was procured from the Egyptian Thebes, whence the tincture of opium, according to the nomenclature of the pharmacopeia about fifty years ago, and still known by this name in the older writers; and, if Dr. Darwin may be credited, the Cumaean Sybil never sat on the portending tripod without first swallowing a few drops of juice of the cherry-laurel.

There is every reason to believe that the Pagan priesthood were under the influence of some narcotic preparation during the display of their oracular power, but the effects produced would seem rather to resemble those of opium, or perhaps of stramonium, than of prussic acid, which the cherry-laurel water is known to contain.

The priests of the American Indians, says

Monardur, whenever they were consulted by the chief gentlemen, or -caciques-, as they are called, took certain leaves of the tobacco, and cast them into the fire, and then received the smoke thus produced by them into their mouths, which caused them to fall upon the ground. After having remained in this position for some time in a state of stupor, they recovered, and delivered the answers, which they pretended to have received during the supposed intercourse with the world of spirits.

The narcotic, or sedative influence of the garden radish, was known in the earliest times. In the fables of antiquity we read, that, after the death of Adonis, Venus, to console herself, and repress her desires, lay down upon a bed of lettuces. The sea onion, or squill, was administered by the Egyptians, in cases of dropsy, under the mystic title of the eye of Typhon. The

practices of incision and scarification, were employed in the Greek camp at the siege of Troy; and the application of spirits to wounds, was likewise understood; for we find Nestor applying a poultice compounded of cheese, onion, and meal, mixed up with the wine of Pramnos, to the wounds of Machaon.

To bring some inactive substance into repute, as promising some extraordinary, nay, wonderful medicinal properties, requires only the sanction of a few great names; and when once established on such a basis, ingenuity, argument, and even experiment, may open their otherwise powerful batteries in vain. In this manner all the quack medicines, ever held in any estimation, got into repute. And the same vulgar prejudice, which induces people to retain an accustomed remedy upon bare assertion and presumption, either of ignorance or

partiality, will, in like manner, oppose the introduction of any innovation in practice with asperity, and not unfrequently with a quantum sufficit of scrutiny and abuse, unless, indeed, it be supported by authorities of still greater weight and consideration.

The history of many articles of diet, as well as medicine, amply prove how much their reputation and fate have depended upon some authority or other. Ipecacuanha had been imported into England for many years, before Helvetius, under the patronage of Louis XIV, succeeded in introducing it into practice in France; and, to the Queen of Charles II., we are indebted for the introduction of that popular beverage, tea, into England. Tobacco has suffered as many variable vicissitudes in its fame and character. It has been successively opposed and commended by physicians, condemned and

praised by priests and kings, and proscribed and protected by governments, until, at length, this once insignificant production of a little island, has succeeded in propagating itself through every climate and country. Nor is the history of the potatoe less remarkable or less strikingly illustrative of the imperious influence of authority. This valuable plant, for upwards of two centuries, received an unprecedented opposition from vulgar prejudice, which all the philosophy of the age was unable to dissipate, until Louis XIV. wore a bunch of the flowers of the potatoe, in the midst of his court, on a day of mirth and festivity. The people then, for the first time, obsequiously acknowledged its utility, and began to express their astonishment at the apathy which had so long prevailed with regard to its general cultivation.

Another instance may be furnished of over-

bearing authority, in giving celebrity to a medicine, or in depriving it of that reputation to which its virtues entitle it, is seen in the history of the Peruvian bark. This famed medicine was imported into Spain by the Jesuits, where it remained seven years, before a trial was given to it. A Spanish priest was the first to whom it was administered, in the year 1639, and even then its use was extremely limited; and it would undoubtedly have sunk into oblivion, but for the supreme power of the church of Rome, under whose protecting auspices it gained a temporary triumph over the passions and prejudices which opposed its introduction. Pope Innocent X. at the intercession of the Cardinal de Lugo, who was formerly a Spanish Jesuit, ordered the bark to be duly examined, and on the favourable report, which was the result of this examination, it immediately rose into high

favour and celebrity.

The root of the male fern, a nostrum for the cure of the tape worm, was secretly retailed by Madame Noufleur. This secret was purchased by Louis XV. for a considerable sum of money. It was not until this event that the physicans discovered, that the same remedy had been administered in the same complaint by Galen. The history of popular remedies in the cure of gout, is equally illustrative of this subject. The Duke of Portland's celebrated powder was nothing less than the -deacintaureon- of Caelius Aurelianus, or the -antidotus et duobus centaurae generibus- of Aetius, the receipt for which, a friend of his grace brought with him from Switzerland, into which country, in all likelihood, it had been introduced by the early medical writers, who had transcribed it from the Greek volumes, soon after their arrival into the western part of Eu-

rope.[134]

The active ingredient of a no less celebrated preparation for the same complaint, the -Eau medicinale- de Husson, a medicine brought into fashion by M. de Husson, a military officer in the service of Louis XVI has been discovered to be the meadow saffron. Upon searching after and trying the properties of this herb, it was observed that similar effects in the cure of the gout were ascribed to a certain plant, called hermodaclyllus, by Oribasius (an eminent physician of the 4th century) and Aetius, who flourished at Alexandria towards the end of the 5th century, but more particularly by Alexander of Tralles, a physician of Asia Minor, whose prescription consisted of hermodaclyllus, ginger, pepper, cummin seed, aniseed, and scammony, which he says will enable those who take it to walk immediately. On an inquiry

being immediately set on foot for the discovery of this unknown plant, a specimen of it was procured at Constantinople, and it actually did turn out to be a species of meadow saffron, the colchicum autumnale of Linnaeus.

The celebrated fever powder of Dr. James was evidently not his original composition, but an Italian nostrum, invented by a person of the name of Lisle; a receipt for the preparation of which is to be found at length in Colborne's complete English Dispensary for the year 1756. The various secret preparations of opium which have been extolled as the discovery of modern days, may be recognised in the works of ancient authors. The use of prussic acid in the cure of consumptions, lately suggested by M. Magendie, at Paris, is little more than the revival of the Dutch practice in this disorder; for Linnaeus informs us, that distilled laurel water

was frequently used in the cure of pulmonary consumption.[135]

We shall conclude these observations with a few remarks on what are termed -patent medicines, nostrums-, or -quack medicines-, and their boasted pretensions in general. There is, in fact, but one state of perfect health, yet the deviations from this state, and the general species of diseases are almost infinite. Hence it will easily be understood, that in the classes of medical remedies, there must likewise he a great variety, and that some of them are even of opposite tendencies. Such are both the warm and cold bath considered as medical remedies. Though opposite to each other in their sensible effects, each of them manifests its medical virtues, yet only in such a state of the body as will admit of using it with advantage. From these premises, it is evident that an universal remedy, or one

that possesses healing powers for the -cure of all diseases-, is, in fact, a non-entity, a mere delusion, the existence of which is physically impossible, as the mere idea of such a thing involves a contradiction. How, for instance, can it he conceived, that the same remedy should be capable of restoring the tone of the muscular fibres, when they are relaxed, and also have the power of relaxing them when they are too rigid; that it should coagulate the fluids when in a state of resolution, and again attenuate them when they are too viscid; that it should moderate the nerves when in a state of preturnatural sensibility, and likewise restore them to their proper degree of irritability when they are in a contrary state.

The belief in an universal remedy has long been abandoned, even among the vulgar, and long exploded in those classes of society, which

are not influenced by prejudice, or tinctured with fanaticism. It is, however, sincerely to be regretted, that the daily press continues to be inundated with advertisements; and that the lower, and less informed class of the community, are still imposed upon by a set of privileged impostors, who frequently puzzle the intelligent to decide, whether the impudence or the industry with which they endeavour to establish the reputation of their respective poisons, be the most prominent feature in their character. In illustration of this last observation, it may further be observed, that most of the nostrums advertised as cough drops, etc., are preparations of opium, similar, but inferior, to the well-known paregoric elixir of the shops, but disguised and rendered more deleterious by the addition of heating and aromatic gums. The injury which may be occasioned by the indis-

criminate employment of such medicines might be very serious and irremediable, as is well known to every person possessing the smallest portion of medical knowledge. The boasted, though groundless pretensions of certain illiterate empirics to cure diseases which have eluded the skill and penetration of the faculty, is another absurdity into which people of good common sense have been most woefully entrapped. The lessons of experience ought to prove the most useful, as purchased at the greatest trouble and expense; but if people choose to run over a precipice with their eyes open, they leave themselves nothing to regret, and the public less to lament, by their fall.

It was justly observed by the sagacious and intelligent Bacon, "that a reflecting physician is not directed by the opinion which the multitude entertain of a favourite remedy, but that

be must be guided by a sound judgment; and consequently, he is led to make very important distinctions between those things which only by their name pass for medical remedies, and others, which in reality possess healing powers.” We avail ourselves of the quotation, as it indirectly censures the conduct of certain medical practitioners, who do not scruple to recommend what are vulgarly called patent and other quack preparations, the composition of which is carefully concealed from the public. Having acquired their unmerited reputation by mere chance, and being supported by the most refined artifices, in order to delude the unwary, we are unable to come at the evidence of perhaps nine tenths of those who have experienced their fatal effects, and who are now no longer in a situation to complain.

From universal remedies or panaceas, to nos-

trums and specifics, such, for instance, as pretend to cure the -same- disease in every patient, is easy and natural. With the latter also, impositions of a dangerous tendency are often practised. It may be asked how far they are practicably admissible, and in what cases they are wholly unavailing? The answer is not difficult. In those diseases, which in every instance depend upon the same cause, as in agues, the small-pox, measles, and many other contagious distempers, the possibility of specifics, in a limited sense, may be rationally, though hypothetically admitted. But in either maladies, the causes of which depend on a variety of other concurrent circumstances, and the cure of which in different individuals, frequently requires very opposite remedies, as in dropsy, various species of colds, the almost infinite variety of consumptions, etc. a specific remedy is an imposition

upon the common sense of mankind. Those who are but imperfectly acquainted with the various causes from which the same disorder originates in different individuals, can never entertain such a vulgar and dangerous notion. They will easily perceive, how much depends upon ascertaining with precision, the seat and cause of the complaint, before any medicine can be presented with safety or advantage:–even life and death are, we are sorry to add, too often decided by the first steps. Different constitutions, different symptoms, and stages of disease, all require more or less a separate consideration. What is more natural than to place confidence in a remedy, which has been known to afford relief to others in the same kind of disposition? The patient anxiously enquires after a person who has been afflicted with the same malady; he is eager to know the remedy

that has been used with success; his friend or neighbour imparts to him the wished for intelligence; he is determined to give the medicine a fair trial, and takes it with confidence. From what has been stated, it will not be difficult to conceive, that if his case does not exactly correspond with that of his friend, any -chance-remedy may prove extremely dangerous, if not fatal.

Hence it becomes evident, that the results are not to be depended upon, nor the chance risked. The physician is obliged to employ all his sagacity, supported by his own experience, as well as by that of his predecessors; and yet he is often under the necessity of discovering, from the progress of the disease, what he could not derive from the minutest research. How then can it be expected, that a novice in the art of healing should be more successful, when

the whole of his method of cure is either the impulse of the moment, or the effect of his own credulity? It may be therefore truly said, that life and death are frequently entrusted to chance!

The late Dr. Huxham, a physician of some eminence in his day, when speaking of Asclepiades, the Roman empiric, says: "This man from a -declaimer- turned -physician-, and set himself up to oppose all the physicians of his time; and the novelty of the thing bore him out, as it frequently doth the quacks of the present time; and ever -will while the majority of the world are fools-." In another place, he curiously contrasts the too timid practice of some regular physicians, with the hazardous treatment, which is the leading feature of quacks: "The timid, low, insipid practice with some, is almost as dangerous as the bold, unwarranted empiricism of others; time and opportunity, never to

be regained, are often lost by the former; while with the latter, by a -bold push-, you are sent off the stage in a moment."

From what has been said, it may confidently be asserted, that a universal remedy still remains as great a desideratum as the philosopher's stone; and either can only obtain credit with the weak-minded, the credulous, or the fanatic. One of the most unfortunate circumstances in the history of such medicines, is the insinuating and dangerous method, by which they are puffed into notice. And as we have little of the beneficial effects which they daily must produce, by being promiscuously applied, people attend only to the extraordinary instances, perhaps not one in fifty, where they have afforded a temporary or apparent relief. It is well known, that the more powerful a remedy is, the more permanent and dangerous must be its ef-

fects on the constitution; especially if it be introduced like many patent medicines, by an almost indefinite encrease of the dose. There is another consideration, not apt to strike those who are unacquainted with the laws of the animal economy. When it is intended to bring about any remarkable change in the system of an organized body, such means are obliged to be employed as may contribute to produce that change without affecting too violently the living powers, or without carrying their action to an improper length. Indeed, the patient may be gradually habituated to almost any stimulus, but at the expence of a paralytic stroke on an impaired constitution. Such are among the melancholy effects of imposture and credulity! "Were it possible," says a learned authority, "to collect all the cases of sacrifices to the mysterious infatuation, it is probable that their num-

ber would exceed the enormous havoc made by gunpowder or the sword.” Another reputable writer makes the following terse remark on this subject: ”As matters stand at present,” says he, ”it is easier to cheat a man out of his life, than of a shilling: and almost impossible either to detect or punish the offender. Notwithstanding this, people still shut their eyes, and take every thing upon trust, that is administered by any pretender to medicine, without daring to ask him a reason for any part of his conduct. Implicit faith, every where else the object of ridicule, is still sacred here.”

FOOTNOTES:

[132] The berries of the belladonna or deadly nightshade, produce, when eaten, a furious madness, followed by sleep, which lasts for twenty-four hours. Such drugs as produce mental stupefaction, without impairing the physical powers, may have given rise to the accounts of men being transformed into brutes, so frequent in what are denominated the fabulous writers, while the evanescent but exquisite joys of an opposite description, an anticipation of what implicit obedience would ensure them for ever, produced blind, furious, devoted adherents to any philo-

sophical speculator, who would venture to try so desperate an experiment.

[133] The Rowan tree or Mountain ash, is used by the Scottish peasantry with the same view; and a small twig of it is sewed up in the cow's tail, to preserve the animal and its produce from the influence of witches and warlocks.

[134] See Pharmacologia, by Dr. Paris.

[135] Vide "Amenetates Academicae," vol. 4.

XVIII. THE PRACTICE OF OBEAH, OR NEGRO WITCHCRAFT–CHARMS–THEIR KNOWLEDGE OP VEGETABLE POISONS–SECRET POISONING.

Obeah, a pretended sort of witchcraft, arising from a superstitious credulity, prevailing among the negroes, has ever been considered as a most dangerous practice, to suppress which, in our West India colonies, the severest laws

have been enacted. The Obeah is considered as a potent and most irresistible spell, withering and paralyzing, by indiscribable terrors and unusual sensations, the devoted victim. One negro who desires to be revenged on another, and is afraid to make an open and manly attack on his adversary, has usually recourse to this practice. Like the witches' cauldron in Macbeth, it is a combination of many strange and ominous things. Earth gathered from a grave, human blood, a piece of wood fastened in the shape of a coffin, the feathers of the carion crow, a snake or alligator's tooth, pieces of egg-shell, and other nameless ingredients, compose the fatal mixture. The whole of these articles may not be considered as absolutely necessary to complete the charm, but two or three are at least indispensable.[136]

It will of course be conceived, that the prac-

tice of OBEAH can have little effect, unless a negro is conscious that it is practised upon him, or thinks so;[137] for, as the whole evil consists in the terrors of a superstitious imagination, it is of little consequence whether it be practised or not, if he only imagines that it is. But if the charm fails to take hold of the mind of the proscribed person, another and more certain expedient is resorted to–the secretly administering of poison to him. This saves the reputation of the sorcerer, and effects the purpose he had in view.

An OBEAH man or woman (for it is practised by both sexes) is a very dangerous person on a plantation; and the practice of it is made felony by law, punishable with death where poison has been administered, and with transportation where only the charm has been used. But numbers have, and may be swept off, by its

infatuation, before the crime is detected; for, strange as it may appear, so much do the negroes stand in awe of those -Obeah- professors, so much do they dread their malice and their power, that, though knowing the havoc they have made, and are still making, they are afraid to discover them to the whites; and, others perhaps, are in league with them for sinister purposes of mischief and revenge.

A negro, under the infatuation of Obeah, can only be cured of his terrors by being made a Christian: refuse him this boon, and he sinks a martyr to imagined evils. A negro, in short, considers himself as no longer under the influence of this sorcery when he becomes a christian. And instances are known of negroes, who, being reduced by the fatal influence of Obeah to the lowest state of dejection and debility, from which there were little hopes of recovery, have

been surprisingly and rapidly restored to health and cheerfulness by being baptized christians. The negroes believe also in apparitions, and stand in great dread of them, conceiving that they forbode death, or some other great evil, to those whom they visit; in short, that the spirits of the dead come upon the earth to be revenged on those who did them evil when in life. Thus we see, that not only from the remotest antiquity, but even among slaves and barbarians, the belief in supernatural agencies has been a popular creed, not, in fact, confined to any distant race or tribe of people; and, what is still more surprising, there is a singular and most remarkable identity in the notion or conception of their infernal ministry.

In the British West Indies, the negroes of the windward coast are called -Mandingoes-, a name which is here taken as descriptive of

a peculiar race or nation. There seems reason, however, to believe, that a -Mandingo- or -Mandinga–man, is properly the same with an Obi-man. A late traveller in Brazil gives us the following anecdotes of the -Mandinga- and -Mandingueiro- of the negroes in that country. "One day," says Mr. Koster, "the old man (a negro named Apollinario) came to me with a face of dismay, to show me a ball of leaves, tied up with a plant called -cypo-, which he had found under a couple of boards, upon which he slept, in an outhouse. The ball was about the size of an apple. I could not imagine what had caused his alarm, until he said that it was -Mandinga- which had been set for the purpose of killing him; and he bitterly bewailed his fate, that at his age, any one should wish to hasten his death, and to carry him from this world, before our lady thought fit to send him. I knew that two of

the black women were at variance, and suspicion fell upon one of them, who was acquainted with the old -Mandingueiro- of Engenho Velho; therefore she was sent for. I judged that the -Mandinga- was not set for Apollonario, but for the negress whose business it was to sweep the out-house. I threatened to confine the suspected woman at Gara unless she discovered the whole affair. She said the Mandinga was placed there to make one of the negresses dislike her fellow-slaves, and prefer her to the other. The ball of -Mandinga- was formed of five or six kinds of leaves of trees, among which was the pomegranate leaf; there were likewise two or three bits of rag, each of a peculiar kind; ashes, which were the bones of some animals; and there might be other ingredients besides, but these were what I could recognize. This woman either could not from ignorance, or would not

give any information respecting the several things of which the ball was composed. I made this serious matter of the -Mandinga-, from knowing the faith which not only many of the negroes have in it, but also some of the mulatto people. There is another name for this kind of charm; it is called -feitico-, and the initiated are called -feiticeros-; of these there was formerly one at the plantation of St. Joam, who became so much dreaded, that his master sold him to be sent to Maranham."

Speaking of the green-beads (-contas verdas-) which are another object of superstition in South America, and of the reliance placed upon them by the Valentoens, a lawless description of persons among the colonists of Brazil; the same author gives us this further view of the -Mandingueiros- and their charms. "These men," says he, "wore on their necks strings of green

beads, which had either come from the coast of Africa, bearing the wonderful property of conveying in safety their possessors through all descriptions of perils, or were charmed by the Mandingueiros, African sorcerers, who had been brought over to the Brazils as slaves, and in secret continued the prohibited practice of imparting this virtue to them. Vincente had been acquainted with some of the men, and was firmly persuaded of the virtues of the green beads. When I expressed my doubts of the efficacy of the beads, against a musket ball well directed, his anger rose; but there was pity mingled with it."

Labat brings these stones from the Orellana, or river of the Amazons. "I was informed," says our author, "that -Contas verdas- came from Africa; but some have found their way from the Orellana, and been put into requisition by the -

Mandingueiros-." Mr. Southey has also given an account of the "green stones of the Amazons," in his history of Brazil, vol. 1. p. 107.

In another place, some traveller presents us with the -Mandingueiros- in the new character of charmer of snakes. "The Mandingueiros are famous, among other feats, for handling poisonous snakes, and can, by particular noises or tunes, call those reptiles from their holes, and make them assemble around them. These sorcerers profess to render innoxious the bites of snakes, to persons who submit to their charms and ceremonies. One of the modes which is adopted for this purpose, is that of allowing a tame snake to crawl over the head, face, and shoulders of the person who is to be -curado do cobras-, cured of snakes, as they term it. The owner of the snake repeats a certain number of words during the operation, of which, the

meaning, if they contain any, is only known to the initiated. The rattle-snake is said to be, above all other species, the most susceptible of attention to the tunes of the Mandingueiros." The above accounts I should not have related upon the authority of one or two authors, I have heard them repeated by several individuals, and even some men of education have spoken of the reputed efficacy of the tame snakes of the Mandingueiros, as if they were somewhat staggered in their belief of it. "These men do certainly play strange tricks and very dexterously." The same writer also observes, "One of the negroes whom I had hired with the plantation of Jaguaribi, had one leg much thicker than the other. This was occasioned, as he told me, by the bite of a rattlesnake; he said he had been -cured- from the bites of snakes by a certain -curador de cobra-, or Mandingueiro, and had

therefore not died; but that as the 'moon was strong,' he had not escaped receiving some injury from the bite."

Beaver, in his African Memoranda, says, "There is another sort of people who travel about in the country, called Mandingo-men, (these are Mahommedans;) they do not work; they go from place to place, and when they find any chiefs or people, whom they think they can make anything of, they take up their abode sometime with them, and make -gree-grees-, and sometimes cast seed from them for which they make them pay."

On this, and other occasion, the word -gree-gree- is applied to a house whence oracles are delivered: but it is also used for a charm or obi. "They themselves," (the natives of the coast) says the author, last quoted, "always wear -gree-grees-, or charms, which they purchase of the -Mandingoes-

, to guard them against the effects of certain arms, or of poison, and on which they place the utmost reliance. They have one against poison; another against a musket; another against a sword; and another against a knife; and, indeed, against almost every thing that they think can hurt them. Mandingo priest, or -gris gris-merchant, that is, a seller of charms, which carried about a person, secure the wearer from any evils,–such as poison, murder, witchcraft, etc. To this priest I had made some handsome presents, and he, in return, gave me twelve gris gris, and assured me that they would inevitably secure me from all danger, at the same time he gave me directions how to dispose of them. Some were to be carried about my person; one secretly placed over each archway; another kept under my pillow, and another under the door of the house I was then building." The

Byugas hold these people in great reverence, and say that they 'talk with God.'

Mr. Long, in his history of the West Indies, states that, under the general name of Obi-men is also included the class of -Myal- men, or those who, by means of a narcotic poison, made with the juice of an herb (said to be the branched Calalue, a species of solanum) which occasions a trance of a certain duration, endeavour to convince the deluded spectators of their power to reanimate dead bodies.

Additional particulars of this superstition preserved by Labat, Edwards, and others, are to be joined with those now produced;[138] but after all, the questions to be solved are, whether Obi, Mandinga, and -gree gree-, are usually words of similar import, and whether those who are conversant in them are all alike, priests of one system of religious faith and worship, or whether

the one does not belong to the worship of a good power, and the other to that of an evil one.

It is remarkable, that while the Etymology of -Obi- has been sought in the names of ancient deities of Egypt, and in that of the serpent in the language of the coast, the actual name of the evil deity or -Devil-, in the same language, appears to have escaped attention. That name is written by Mr. Edwards, -Obboney-; and the bearer of it is described as a malicious deity, the author of all evil, the inflictor of perpetual diseases, and whose anger is to be appeased only by human sacrifices. This evil deity is the Satan of our own faith; and it is the worship of Satan which, in all parts of the world constitutes the essence of sorcery.

If this name of -Obboney- has any relation to the Ob of Egypt, and if the Ob, both anciently in Egypt, and to this day in the west

of Africa, signifies "a serpent," what does this discover to our view, but that Satan has the name of -serpent- among the Negro nations as well as among those of Europe? As to how it has happened that the serpent, which, in some systems, is the emblem of the good spirit, is in others the emblem of the evil one, that is a topic which belongs to a more extensive enquiry. This is enough for our present satisfaction to remember that the profession of, and belief in sorcery or witchcraft, supposes the existence of two deities, the one, the author of good, and the other the author of evil; the one worshipped by good men for good things, and for good purposes: and the other by bad men for bad things and purposes; and that this worship is sorcery and the worshippers sorcerers.

It will be seen above, that since African charms are to prevent evil, and others to procure it,

the first belong to the worship, and are derived from the power, of the good spirit; and the second are from the opposite source. It is to be concluded, then, that the superstition of -Obi- is no other than the practice of, and belief in the worship of -Obboney- or -Oboni-, the evil deity of the Africans, the serpent of Africa and of Europe, and the old serpent and Satan of the scriptures; and that the witchcraft of the negroes is evidently the same with our own. It might indeed be further shown, that the latter have their temporary transformations of men into alligators, wolves, and the like, as the French have their loups-garoux, the Germans their war-wolves, wolf-men, and the rest.[139]

The negroes practising obeah are acquainted with some very powerful vegetable poisons, which they use on these occasions, and by which they acquire much extensive credit. Their fetiches

are their household gods, or domestic divinities; one of whom is supposed to preside over a whole province, and one over every family. This idol is a tree, the head of an ape, a bird, or any such thing, as their fancy may suggest. The negroes have long been held famous in the act of secret or slow poisoning.

If doubts and difficulties envelope the discovery of poisons, whose distinguishing character is the rapidity of these effects, how much greater must be the uncertainty when we are required to ascertain the administrations of what are called slow poisons. This subject, indeed, is so closely entwined with popular superstitions, that it is difficult to separate truth from falsehood. In Italy, for example, it was formerly said, that poisons were made to destroy life at any stated period–from a few hows to a year. This, however, turns out to be a mere fic-

tion; and, it is well understood, that we know of no substances that will produce death at a determinate epoch. The following case of the late Prince Charles of Augustenburgh, nevertheless, shows that the idea of slow poison is still very prevalent, even among the physicians of continental Europe.

Prince Charles of Augustenburgh, Crown Prince of Sweden, and the predecessor of Bernadotte, in that station, fell dead from his horse on the 22nd of May, 1810, while reviewing troops in Scania. His death, during that stormy period of public affairs, excited great attention, and an opinion soon spread abroad that he had been poisoned. The king ordered a judicial investigation; and it appeared that Dr. Rossi, the physician of the late Prince, had, without directions, proceeded to inspect the body twenty-four hours after death; that he had performed

this operation with great negligence, omitting many things which the law presented, which the assisting physicians proposed, and which were essential to render it satisfactory; and finally, that the coats of the stomach, instead of being preserved and submitted to chemical analysis were, according to his own acknowledgment, thrown away. The royal tribunal adjudged him to be deprived of his appointment, and to be banished from the kingdom. This decision would not of course, diminish the suspicion already excited; and among other physicians, who were consulted on the case, M. Lodin, professor of Medicine at Lynkoping, presented two memoirs, in which he stated it as his opinion, that a -slow poison- of a vegetable nature, and probably analogous to the -aqua tofania-, had been administered to the Prince, and that this had caused the apopletic fit of which he

died. His reasons were:

1. That the Prince had always enjoyed good health previous to his arrival in Sweden, and, indeed, had not been ill, until after eating a cold pie at an inn, in Italy. He was shortly after seized with violent vomiting, while the rest of the company experienced no ill effects.

2. The Prince was naturally very temperate.

3. Ever since he arrived in Sweden he had experienced a loss of appetite, with cholic and diarrhoea; and

4. That on dissection, the spleen was found of a black colour and in a state of decomposition, and the liver indurated and dark coloured. Whilst during life he had experienced no symptoms corresponding to these appearances. Dr. Lodin confessed, however, that he was unacquainted with the effects that indicate the administration of a slow poison, but thought the

previous symptoms were such as might be expected from it.

For the credit of the profession, this conjectural opinion met with decided reprobation from other medical men. It appeared that the Prince had, for several days previously, been subject to giddiness and pain in the head, and that all the symptoms were readily referable to a simple case of apoplexy, while the appearances on dissection showed that rapid tendency to putrefaction, which is frequently observed in similar cases.

The public are highly indebted to professor Beckman for a very elaborate article, in which he has concentrated nearly all that is known concerning -secret poisoning-. Of this we shall here present our readers with an abstract, as peculiarly adapted to the demonology of medicine, aided with some facts from other sources.

Professor Beckman considers it unquestionable, that the ancients were acquainted with this kind of poison, and thinks that it may be proved from the testimony of Plutarch, Quintilian, and other respectable authors. The former states that a slow poison, which occasioned heat, a cough, spitting of blood, a consumption, and weakness of intellect, was administered to Aratus of Sicyon. Theophrastus speaks of a poison prepared from aconite, which could be moderated in such a manner as to have effect in two or three months, or at the end of a year or two years; and he also relates, that Thrasyas had discovered a method of preparing from other plants a poison which, given in small doses, occasioned a certain but easy death, without any pain, and which could be kept back for a long time without causing weakness or corruption. The last poison was much used at Rome, about

two hundred years before the christian era. At a later period, a female named Locusta, was the agent in preparing these poisons, and she destroyed, in this way, at the instigation of Nero, Britannicus, son of Agrippina.

The Carthagenians seem also to have been acquainted with this act of diabolical poisoning; and they are said, on the authority of Aulus Gellius, to have administered some to Regulus, the Roman general. Contemporary writers, however, it must be added, do not mention this.

The principal poisons known to the ancients were prepared from plants, and particularly aconite, hemlock, and poppy, or from animal substances; and among the latter none is more remarkable than that obtained from the sea-hare (-Lepus marinus- or -Apylsia depilans- of the system of nature). With this, Titus is said to have been dispatched by Domitian. They do not seem to

have been acquainted with the common mineral poisons.

In the year 1659, during the pontificate of Alexander VII, it was observed at Rome, that many young women became widows, and that many husbands died when they became disagreeable to their wives. The government used great vigilance to detect the poisoners, and suspicion at length fell upon a society of young wives, whose president appeared to be an old woman, who pretended to foretel future events, and who had often predicted very exactly the death of many persons. By means of a crafty female their practices were detected; the whole society were arrested and put to the torture, and the old woman, whose name was Spara, and four others, were publicly hanged. This Spara was a Sicilian, and is said to have acquired her knowledge from Tofania at Palermo.

Tophania, or Tofania, was an infamous woman, who resided first at Palermo and afterwards at Naples. She sold the poison which from her acquired the name of Aqua della Toffana (it was also called -Acquetta di Napoli-, or -Acquetta- alone), but she distributed her preparation by way of charity to such wives as wished to have other husbands. From four to six drops were sufficient to destroy a man; and it was asserted, that the dose could be so proportioned as to operate in a certain time. Labat says, that Tofania distributed her poison in small glass phials, with this inscription—Manna of St. Nicholas of Bavi-, and ornamented with the image of the saint. She lived to a great age, but was at last dragged from a monastery, in which she had taken refuge, and put to the torture, when she confessed her crimes and was strangled.

In no country, however, has the art of poi-

soning excited more attention than it did in France, about the year 1670. Margaret d'Aubray, wife of the Marquis de Brinvillier, was the principal agent in this horrible business. A needy adventurer, named Godin de St. Croix, had formed an acquaintance with the Marquis during their campaigns in the Netherlands–became at Paris a constant visitor at his house, where in a short time he found means to insinuate himself into the good graces of the Marchioness. It was not long before this Marquis died; not, however, until their joint fortune was dissipated. Her conduct, in openly carrying on this amour, induced her father to have St. Croix arrested and sent to the Bastile. Here he got acquainted with an Italian, of the name of Exili, from whom he learnt the art of preparing poisons.

After a year's imprisonment St. Croix was released, when he flew to the Marchioness and

instructed her in the art, in order that she might employ it in bettering the circumstances of both. She assumed the appearance of a nun, distributed food to the poor, nursed the sick in the Hotel Dieu, and tried the strength of her poisons, undetected, on these hapless wretches. She bribed one Chaussee, St. Croix's servant, to poison her own father, after introducing him into his service, and also her brother, and endeavoured to poison her sister. A suspicion arose that they had been poisoned, and the bodies were opened, but no detection followed at this time. Their villainous practices were brought to light in the following manner:–St. Croix, when preparing poison, was accustomed to wear a glass mask; but, as this happened once to drop off by accident, he was suffocated and found dead in his laboratory. Government caused the effects of this man, who had no fam-

ily, to be examined, and a list of them to be made out. On searching them, there was found a small box, to which St. Croix had affixed a written paper containing a request, that after his death "it might be delivered to the Marchioness de Brinvillier, who resides in the street Neuve St. Paul, as every thing it contains concerns her, and belongs to her alone; and as, besides, there is nothing in it that can be of use to any person except her; and in case she shall be dead before me, to burn it, and every thing it contains; without opening or altering any thing; and in order that no one may plead ignorance, I swear by God, whom I adore, and all that is most sacred, that I advance nothing but what is true. And if my intentions, just and reasonable as they are, be thwarted in this point, I charge their consciences with it, both in this world and the next, in order that I may unload

mine, protesting that this is my last will. Done at Paris, this 25th May, in the afternoon, 1672. -De Sainte Croix-”

Nothing could he a greater inducement to have it opened, than this singular petition, and that being done, there was found in it a great abundance of poisons of every kind, with labels, on which their effects proved, by experiments on animals, were marked. The principal poison, however, was corrosive sublimate. When the Marchioness heard of the death of her lover and instructor, she was desirous to have the casket, and endeavoured to get possession of it by bribing the officers of justice; but as she failed in this, she quitted the kingdom. La Chaussee, however, continued at Paris, laid claim to the property of St. Croix, was seized and imprisoned, confessed more acts of villainy than was suspected, and was in con-

sequence broke alive upon the wheel, in 1673,– The Marchioness fled to England, and from thence to Liege, where she took refuge in a convent. Desgrais, an officer of justice, was dispatched in pursuit of her, and having assumed the dress of an Abbe, contrived to entice her from this privileged place. Among her effects at the convent there was found a confession, and a complete catalogue of all her crimes, in her own hand-writing. She was taken to Paris, convicted, and on the 16th of July, 1676, publicly beheaded, and afterwards burnt.

The practice of poisoning was not, however, suppressed by this execution, and it was asserted, that confessions of a suspicious nature were constantly made to the priests. A court for watching, searching after, and punishing prisoners was at length established in 1697, under the title of -chambre de poison-, or -chambre

ardente-. This was shortly used as a state engine, against those who were obnoxious to the court, and the names of individuals of the first rank, both male and female, were prejudiced. Two females, la Vigreux and la Voison were burnt alive, by order of this court, in February, 1680. But it was abolished in the same year.

Professor Beckman relates the following, as communicated to him by Linnaeus: "Charles XI, King of Sweden, having ruined several noble families by seizing on their property, and having, after that, made a journey to Torneo, he fell into a consumptive disorder, which no medicine could cure. One day he asked his physician in a very earnest manner what was the cause of his illness. The physician replied, 'Your Majesty has been loaded with too many maledictions.'– 'Yes,' returned the king, 'I wish to God that the reduction of the nobilities' estates had not

taken place, and that I had never undertaken a journey to Torneo.' After his death his intestines were found to be full of small ulcers."

There has been a great diversity of opinions as to the nature of these poisons. That prepared by Tofania appears to have been a clear insipid water, and the sale of aqua fortis was for a long time forbidden in Rome, because it was considered the principal ingredient. This, however, is not probable.

In Paris, the famous -poudre de succession- (also a secret poison) was at one time supposed to consist of diamond dust, powdered exceedingly fine; and at another time, to contain sugar of lead as the principal ingredient. Haller was of this last opinion. In the casket of St. Croix were found sublimate, opium, regulus of antimony, vitriol, and a large quantity of poison ready prepared, the principal ingredients of which the

physicians were not able to detect. Garelli, physician to Charles VI, King of the Two Sicilies, at the time when Tofania was arrested, wrote to the celebrated Hoffman, that the Aqua Tofania was nothing else than crystallized arsenic, dissolved in a large quantity of water by decoction, with the addition, (but for what purpose we know not) of the herb -Cymbalaria-, (probably the -Antirrhinum Cymbalaria-). And this information he observes, was communicated to him by his imperial majesty himself, to whom the judicial procedure, confirmed by the confession of the criminal, was transmitted. But it was objected to this opinion, that it differed from the ordinary effects of arsenic, in never betraying itself by any particular action on the human body.

The Abbe Gagliani, on the other hand, asserts that it is a mixture of opium and can-

tharides, and that the liquor obtained from its composition, is as limpid as rock water, and without taste. Its effects are slow, and almost imperceptible. Beckman appears to favour this idea, and suggests that a similar poison is used in the East, under the name of -powst-, being water that had stood a night over the juice of poppies. It is given to princes, whom it is wished to despatch privately; and produces loss of strength and understanding, so that they die in the end, torpid and insensible.[140]

The following extract will show that secret poisoning has penetrated into the forests of America. "The celebrated chief, -Blackbird- of the Omawhaws, gained great reputation as a medicine man; his adversaries fell rapidly before his potent spells. His medicine was arsenic, furnished him for this purpose by the villainy of the traders."[141]

FOOTNOTES:

[136] Various etymologies have been suggested for the word obi. Mr. Long, in a paper transmitted several years since, by the agents of Jamaica to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council, and by the latter subjoined to the report on the slave trade, expresses himself on this subject as follows: "From the learned Mr. Bryant's commentary on the word OPH, we obtain a very probable etymology of the term; 'a serpent,' in the Egyptian language, was called -Aub- or -Ob-." '-Obion-,' is still the Egyptian name of a serpent.' 'Moses, in the name of God,

forbids the Israelites to inquire of the demon -Ob-, which is translated in our Bible, charmer or wizzard, -Divinator aut sorcilegus-.' The woman of Endor is called -Oub- or -Ob-, translated Pythonissa; and -Oubaois- (he cites Horus Apollo) was the name of the Basilisk or royal serpent, emblem of the sun, and an ancient oracular deity of Africa. Their etymology, if admitted, connects the modern superstitions of the west of Africa, with the ancient ones of the east of that continent, from which source they have also been spread in Europe. They are humble parts of the great system which is adorned with the fables of Osiris and Isis; and they comprise not only the Obi of Africa, but the witchcraft of our own country. That superstition is every where connected with the worship of the serpent, and with the moon and the cat. Skulls and teeth of cats are among the principal ingredients of the

African charms or -Obies-.

[137] Mr. Long gives the following account of the furniture of the house of an Obi-woman, or African witch in Jamaica: "The whole inside of the roof, (which was of thatch) and every crevice of the walls were stuck with the implements of her trade, consisting of rags, feathers, bones of cats, and a thousand other articles. Examining further, a large earthen pot or jar, close covered, contained a prodigious quantity of round balls of earth or clay, of various dimensions, large and small, whitened on the outside, and variously compounded, some with hair and rags, or feathers of all sorts, and strongly bound with twine: others blended with the upper section of the skulls of cats, or set round with cats' teeth and claws, or with human or dogs' teeth, and some glass beads of different colours. There were also a great many

egg-shells filled with a viscous or gummy substance, the qualities of which were neglected to be examined; and many little bags filled with a variety of articles, the particulars of which cannot, at this distance of time, be recollected." Shakespeare and Dryden, have left us poetical accounts of the composition of European - Obies- or charms, with which, and with more historical descriptions, the above may be compared. The midnight hours of the professors of Obi, are also to be compared with the witches of Europe. Obi, therefore, is the serpent-worship. The Pythoness, at Delphos, was an Obi-woman. With the serpent-worship is joined that of the sun and moon, as the governors of the visible world, and emblems of the male and female nature of the godhead; and to the cat, on account of her nocturnal prowlings, is ascribed a mysterious relationship to the moon. The dog and the

wolf, doubtless for the same reason, are similarly circumstanced.

[138] The superstition of Obi was never generally remarked upon in the British West Indies till the year 1760, when, after an insurrection in Jamaica, of the Coromantyn or Gold Coast negroes, it was found that it had been made an instrument for promoting that disturbance. An old Coromantyn negro, the chief instigator and oracle of the insurgents of the parish of St. Mary, in which the insurrection broke out, who had administered the -Fetiche- or solemn oath to the conspirators, and furnished them with a magical preparation, which was to make them invulnerable, was at that time apprehended and punished, and a law was enacted for the suppression of the practice, under which several examples were made, but without effecting for many years, any diminution of

the evil sought to be remedied.

[139] In Kosters's travels in Brazil, we read of a negro who was reported by one of his fellows to become occasionally -lobas homen- or wolf-man. "I asked him," said the author, "to explain; when he said, that the man was at times transformed into an animal, of the size of a calf with the figure of a dog;" and in the African memoranda is an account of a negro who professed and even believed to have the power of transforming himself into an alligator, in which state he devoured men. Upon being questioned by Captain Beaver, he answered, "I can change myself into an alligator, and have often done it." But though these may be genuine African superstitions, and not such as have been introduced by the Portuguese, yet it is certain there is no part of Europe to which they do not equally belong.

[140] Beckman, vol 1, p. 74 to 103.

[141] See Major Long's expedition, vol. 1. p. 226.

XIX. ON THE ORIGIN AND SUPERSTITIOUS INFLUENCE OP RINGS.

The ancient magicians, among other pretended extraordinary powers of accomplishing wonder-ful things by their superior knowledge of the secret powers of nature, of the virtues of plants

and minerals, and of the motions and influence of the stars, attached no small degree of mystic importance to rings, the origin of which, their matter and uses, together with the supposed virtues of the stones set in them, afford a subject squaring so much with our design, and so deserving of notice from the curious, that no apology need be made for discoursing on them.

According to the accounts of the heathen mythologists, Prometheus, who, in the first times, had discovered a great number of secrets, having been delivered from the charms, by which he was fastened to mount Caucasus for stealing fire from heaven, in memory or acknowledgment of the favour he received from Jupiter, made himself of one of those chains, a ring, in whose collet he represented the figure of part of the rock where he had been detained–or rather, as Pliny says, set it in a bit of the same rock,

and put it on his finger. This was the first ring and the first stone. But we otherwise learn, that the use of rings is very ancient, and the Egyptians were the first inventors of them; which seems confirmed by the person of Joseph, who, as we read (Genesis, chap, xi.) for having interpreted Pharoah's dream, received not only his liberty, but was rewarded with his prince's ring, a collar of gold, and the superintendancy of Egypt.

Josephus, in the third book of Jewish antiquities says, the Israelites had the use of them after passing the Red Sea, because Moses at his return from Mount Sinai, found that they had forged the golden calf from their wives' rings, enriched with precious stones. The same Moses, upwards of 400 years before the wars of Troy, permitted the priests he had established, the use of gold rings, enriched with precious stones.

The high priest wore upon his ephod, which was a kind of camail, rich rings, that served as clasps; a large emerald was set and engraved with mysterious names. The ring he wore on his finger was of inestimable value and celestial virtue. Had not Aaron, the high priest of the Hebrews, a ring on his finger, whereof the diamond, by its virtues, operated prodigious things? For it changed its vivid lustre into a dark colour, when the Hebrews were to be punished by death for their sins. When they were to fall by the sword it appeared of a blood colour; if they were innocent it sparkled as usual.

It is observable that the ancient Hebrews used rings even in the time of the wars of Troy. Queen Jezebel, to destroy Nabath, as it is related in the first Book of Kings, made use of the ring of Ahab, King of the Israelites, her husband, to seal the counterfeit letters that ordered the

death of that unfortunate man. Did not Judah, as mentioned in the 38th chapter of Genesis, abuse his daughter-in-law, Thamar, who had disguised herself, by giving her his ring and bracelets, as a pledge of the faith he had promised her?

Though Homer is silent in regard to rings, both in his Iliad and Odyssey, they were, notwithstanding, used in the time of the Greeks and Trojans; and from them they were received by several other nations. The Lacedemonians, as related by Alexander, ab. Alexandro, pursuant to the orders of their king, Lycurgus, had only iron rings, despising those of gold; either their king was thereby willing to retrench luxury, or to prohibit the use of them.

The ring was reputed, by some nations, a symbol of liberality, esteem, and friendship, particularly among the Persians, none being per-

mitted to wear any, except they were given by the king himself. This is what may also be remarked in the person of Apollonius Thyaneus, as a token of singular esteem and liberality, received one from the great Iarchas, prince of the Gymnosophists, who were the ancient priests of India and dwelt in forests, as our ancient bards and druids, where they applied themselves to the study of wisdom, and to the speculation of the heaven and stars. This philosopher, by the means of that ring, learned every day the secrets of nature.

Though the ring found by Gyges, shepherd to the King of Lydia, has more of fable than of truth in it, it will not, however, be amiss, to relate what is said concerning Herodotus, Coelius, after Plato and Cicero, in the third book of his Offices. This Gyges, after a great flood, passed into a very deep cavity in the earth, where

having found in the belly of a brazen horse, with a large aperture in it, a human body of enormous size, he pulled from off one of the fingers a ring of surprising virtue; for the stone on the collet rendered him who wore it invisible, when the collet was turned towards the palm of the hand, so that the party could see, without being seen, all manner of persons and things. Gyges, having made trial of its efficacy, bethought himself that it would be a means for ascending the throne of Lydia, and for gaining the Queen by it. He succeeded in his designs, having killed Candaules, her husband. The dead body this ring belonged to was that of an ancient Brahman, who, in his time, was chief of that sect.

The rings of the ancients often served for seals. Alexander the Great, after the death and defeat of Darius, used his ring for sealing the

letters he sent into Asia, and his own for those he sent to Europe. It is customary in Rome for the bridegroom to send the bride, before marriage, a ring of iron, without either stone or collet, to denote how lasting their union ought to be, and the frugality they were to observe together; but luxury herein soon gained ground, and there was a necessity for moderating it. Caius Marius did not wear one of gold till his third consulship; and Tiberius, as Suetonius says, made some regulations in the authority of wearing rings; for, besides the liberty of birth, he required a considerable revenue, both on the father and grandfather's side.

In a Polyglot dictionary, published in the year 1625, by John Minshew, our attention was attracted by the following observations, under the article "RINGFINGER.–Vetus versiculus singulis digitis Annulum trebuens Miles. Mercator. Stul-

tus. Maritus. Amator. Pollici adscribitur Militi, seu Doctor. Mercatorem a pollice secundum, stultorum, tertium. Nuptorum vel studiosorum quartum. Amatorum ultimum."

By which it appears, that the fingers on which annuli were anciently worn were directed by the calling, or peculiarity of the party. Were it

A soldier, or doctor, to him was assigned the thumb. A sailor, the finger next the thumb. A fool, the middle finger. A married or diligent person, the fourth or ring finger. A lover, the last or little finger.

The medicinal or curative power of rings are numerous and, as a matter of course, founded on imaginary qualities. Thus the wedding ring rubbing upon that little abscess called the stye, which is frequently seen on the tarsi of the eyes, is said to remove it. Certain rings are worn as talismans, either on the fingers or suspended

from the neck; the efficacy of which may be referred to the effects usually produced by these charms.

XX. CELESTIAL INFLUENCES–OMENS–CLIMACTERICS–PREDOMINATIONS–LUCKY AND UNLUCKY DAYS–EMPIRICS, &C.

of their art, to render those years of our age, which they call climacterics, dangerous and formidable.

The word climacteric is derived from the Greek, which means by a scale or ladder, and implies a critical year, or a period in a man's age, wherein, according Ficinusological juggling, there is some notable alteration to arise in the body, and a person stands in great danger of death. The first climacteric is the seventh year of a man's life; the others are multiples of the first, as 21, 49, 56, 63, and 84, which two last are called the grand climacterics and the danger more certain. The foundation of this opinion is accounted for by Mark Ficimis as follows:–There is a year, he tells us, assigned for each planet to rule over the body of a man, each of his turn; now Saturn being the most -maleficient- (malignant) planet of all, every seventh year, which falls to its lot, becomes very dangerous; especially

those of sixty-three and eighty-four, when the person is already advanced in years. According to this doctrine, some hold every seventh year an established climacteric; but others only allow the title to those produced by multiplication of the climacterical space by an odd number, 3, 5, 7, 9, &c. Others observe every ninth year as a climacteric.

Climacteric years are pretended, by some, to be fatal to political bodies, which, perhaps, may be granted, when they are proved to be so more than to natural ones; for it must be obvious that the reason of such danger can by no means be discovered, nor the relation it can have with any other of the numbers above mentioned.

Though this opinion has a great deal of antiquity on its side; Aulus Gellius says–it was borrowed from the Chaldeans, who possibly might

receive it from Pythagoras, whose philosophy teemed much in numbers, and who imagined a very extraordinary virtue in the number 7. The principal authors on climacterics are–Plato, Cicero, Macrobius, Aulus Gellius. Among the ancients–Argal, Magirus, and Solmatheus. Among the moderns–St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, Beda and Boethius, all countenance the opinion.

There is a work extant, though rather scarce, by Hevelius, under the title of -Annus Climactericus-, wherein he describes the loss he sustained by his observatory, &c. being burnt; which it would appear happened in his grand climacteric, of which he was extremely apprehensive.

Astrologers have also brought under their inspection and controul the days of the year, which they have presumed to divide into -lucky- and -unlucky- days; calling even the sacred scriptures, and the common belief of christians, in

former ages, to their assistance for this purpose. They pretend that the fourteenth day of the first month was a blessed day among the Israelites, authorised, as they pretend, by the several passages out of Exodus, v. 18:–

"In the first -month-, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day at even," v. 40. Now, the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

41. "And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt."

42. "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; that is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel, in their gen-

erations."

51. "And it came to pass, the self same day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies." Also -Leviticus, chap. 23, v. 5.- "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the Lord's passover." -Numbers, chap. 28, v. 10.- "Four hundred and thirty years being expired of their dwelling in Egypt, even in the self same day they departed thence."

With regard to evil days and times, Astrologers refer to -Amos. chap. 5, v. 13.- "Therefore, the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time," and -chap. 6, v. 3-, "Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;" also -Psalm 37, v. 19-, "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine, they shall be satisfied;" and -Jeremiah, chap. 46, v. 21-, "Also

her hired men are in the midst of her, like fatted bullocks, for they are also turned back and are fled away together; they did not stand because the day of their calamity was come upon them, and the time of their visitation." And to -Job- cursing the day of his birth, from the first to the eleventh verse. In confirmation of which may also be quoted a calendar, extracted out of several ancient Roman Catholic prayer books, written on vellum, before printing was invented, in which were inserted the unfortunate days of each month, which it would be superfluous to cite here.[142]

Roman History sufficiently proves that the nature of lucky and unlucky days owes its origin to Paganism; where it is mentioned, that that very day four years, the civil wars were begun by Pompey, the father; Caesar made an end of them with his son, Cneius Pompeius be-

ing slain; and that the Romans counted the 13th of February an unlucky day, because, on that day they were overthrown by the Gauls at Alba; and the Fabii attacking the city of the Recii, were all slain, with the exception of one man; also from the calendar of Ovid's "Fastorum," -Aprilis erat mensis Graecis auspicatissimus-; and from Horace, Book 2nd, Ode 13, cursing the tree that had nearly fallen upon it; -ille nefasto posuit die-.

The Pagans believed there were particular months and days which carried something fatal in them; those, for instance, upon which the state perhaps had lost a great battle; and under this impression, they never undertook any enterprise on these days and months. The twenty-fourth of February in the Bisextile years was considered so unlucky, that Valentinian (-Ammiam. Marcell. lib. 26. cap. 1.-) be-

ing elected Emperor upon it, durst not appear in public under the apprehension of suffering the fatality of the day. Many other particular days might be quoted upon which generals of armies have constantly been favoured with fortune. Timoleon (-Corn. Nepos-) won all his famous battles on his birthday. Soliman (-Duverdier. Hist. des Turcs-) won the battle of Mohac, and took the fortress of Belgrade, and, according to some historians, the Isle of Rhodes, and the town of Buda on the 26th of August. But we find, in like manner, the same day lucky and unlucky to the same people. Ventidius, at the head of the Roman army, routed the Parthians, and slew their young king Pacorus who commanded them, on the same day that Crassus, another Roman general, had been slain, and his whole army cut in pieces by the same people. Lucullus having attacked Tigranes, king of

Armenia, notwithstanding the vain scruples of his officers, who desired him to beware fighting on that day, which was noted in the Roman calendar as an unlucky one, ever since the fatal overthrow of the Romans by the Cimbri; but he, (Lucullus) despising the superstition, gained one of the most memorable battles recorded in Roman history, and changed the destiny of the day as he promised those who would have dissuaded him from the enterprise. And Valentinian's unlucky day was that on which Charles V, another Roman Emperor, promised himself the best good fortune. Friday is deemed on unlucky day for engaging in any particular business, and there are few, if any, captains of ships who would sail from any port, on this day of the week for their destination.

The fishermen who dwell on the coasts of the Baltic never use their nets between All-saints

and St Martin's; they would then be certain of not taking any fish through the whole year: they never fish on St Blaise's day. On Ash Wednesday the women neither sew nor knit, for fear of bringing misfortune upon their cattle. They contrive so as not to use fire on St. Laurence's day; by taking this precaution they think themselves secure against fire for the rest of the year.

This prejudice of lucky and unlucky days has existed at all times and in all nations; but if knowledge and civilization have not removed it, they have at least diminished its influence. In Livonia, however, the people are more than ever addicted to the most superstitious ideas on this subject. In a Riga journal (-Rigaische Stadblatter-, No. 3657, anno 1822, edited by M. Sontag) there are several passages relative to a letter from heaven, and which is no other than a catalogue of lucky and unlucky days.

This letter is in general circulation; every body carries it about him, and though strictly forbidden by the police, the copies are multiplied so profusely as to increase the evil all attempts to destroy which have hitherto failed. Among the country people this idea is equivalent to the doctrine of fatality; and if they commit faults or even crimes, on the days which are marked as unlucky, they do not consider themselves as guilty, because they were predestined.

The flight of certain birds, or the meeting of certain animals on their first going out in the morning, are with them good or bad omens. They do not hunt on St. Mark's, or St. Catherine's day, on penalty of being unsuccessful all the rest of the year. It is a good sign to sneeze on Christmas day. Most of them are so prepossessed against Friday, that they never settle any important business, or conclude a bargain

on that day; in some places they do not even dress their children. They do not like visits on Thursdays, for it is a sign they shall have troublesome guests the whole week.

In some districts of Esthonia, up the Baltic, when the shepherd brings his flocks back from the pasture, in spring for the first time, he is sprinkled with water from head to foot under the persuasion that this makes the cattle thrive. The malignity of beasts of prey is believed to be prevented by designating them not by their proper names, but by some of their attributes. For instance, they call the fox -hallkuhl- (grey coat) the bear, -layjatyk- (broad-foot), etc. etc. They also fancy that they can oblige the wolf to take another direction by strewing salt in his way. The howling of wolves, especially at daybreak, is considered a very bad omen, predicting famine or disease. In more ancient times, it

was imagined that these animals, thus asked their god to give them food, which he threw them out of the clouds. When a wolf seizes any of their cattle, they can oblige him to quit his prey, by dropping a piece of money, their pipe, hat, or any other article they have about them at the time. They do not permit the hare to be often mentioned, for fear of drawing it into their corn-fields. To make hens lay eggs, they beat them with an old broom. In families where the wife is the eldest child of her parents, it has been observed that they always sell the first calves, being convinced, that, if kept, they would not thrive. To speak of insects or mischievous animals at meal-times, is a sure way to make them more voracious.

If a fire breaks out, they think to stop its fury by throwing a black hen into the flames. This idea, of an expiatory sacrifice, offered to a

malevolent and tutelary power, is a remnant of paganism. Various other traces of it are found among the Esthonians; for instance, at the beginning of their meals, they purposely let fall a piece of new bread, or some drops of liquor from a bottle as an offering to the divinity.

It is very offensive to the peasants, for any one to look into their wells; they think it will cause the wells to dry up.

When manna is carried into the fields, that which falls from the cart is not gathered up, lest mischievous insects and blights come upon the corn.

When an old house is quitted for a new one they are attentive in noting the first animal that dies. If it be an animal with hairy feet, the sign is good; but if with naked feet, some fowl, for instance, there will be mourning in the house; it is a sign of misery and bad success in all their

undertakings. These, with a scrupulous adherence to lucky and unlucky days, are the prevailing popular superstitions in the three duchies; a great number of which, especially among the Esthonians, are connected with their ancient mythology.

In reading that pleasant volume, by the late Sir Humphrey Davy, entitled -Salmonia-, it is impossible not to be struck with his remark respecting omens, which is here briefly noticed, with an account of others, which it is imagined have not yet found their way far into print, in order to account for such seeming absurdities.

"The search after food,[143] as we agreed on a former occasion, is the principal cause why animals change their places. The different tribes of wading birds always migrate when rain is about to take place; and I remember once in Italy, having been long waiting, in the end of

March, for the arrival of double snipe, in the campagna of Rome; a great flight appeared on the third of April, and the day after, heavy rain set in, which greatly interfered with my sport. The vulture, upon the same principle, follows armies; and I have no doubt that the augury of the ancients was a good deal founded upon the observation of the instinct of birds. There are many superstitions of the vulgar owing to the same source. For anglers, in spring, it is always unluckly to see single magpies; but two may always be regarded as a favourable omen; and the reason is, that in cold and stormy weather, one magpie alone leaves the nest in search of food, the other remaining sitting upon the eggs of the young ones: but, when two go out together, it is only when the weather is mild and warm, and favourable for fishing.

"This reasoning will, in general, be found

correct, and may be applied to solve many of the superstitions in the country; but the case of the magpie is entitled to a little more consideration. The piannet, as we call her in the North of England, is the most unlucky of all birds, to see singly at any time; this, however, does not often happen, except a short time during incubation; they either appear in pairs or in families; but even this last appearance is as alarming to our grandmothers. The following distich shows what each forbodes:–'One sorrow, two mirth, three a wedding, four death.' This bird, indeed, appears to have taken the same place with us, as an omen of evil, that the owl had amongst the ancients. The nurse is often heard to declare that she has lost all hopes of her charge when she has observed a piannet on the house-top.

"Another prejudice, indulged even by our good

wives, is that of destroying the feathers of the pigeon instead of saving them to stuff beds, etc. They say, that if they were to do so, it would only prolong the sufferings of the death-bed; and when these are more than usually severe, it is attributed to this cause, and the reason given 'because the bird has no gall' is to them quite conclusive, but to me, perfectly irrelevant and unsatisfactory. A belief amongst boys, that to harm or disturb the nests of the redbreast or swallow is unlucky, appears very general throughout the kingdom; and the keen bird-nester, who prides himself on the quantity of eggs blown and strung bead-fashion, here often gets mortified by finding his trophies destroyed by the housewife who considers their presence as affecting the safety of her crokery ware. This belief may have been encouraged, if not invented, for a humane purpose: but how

are we to account for the efficacy of the Irish stone in curing swellings caused by venomous reptiles, by merely being rubbed upon the part affected? The fullest faith in the practice appears to have prevailed in the country at no distant period, and is yet far from extinct. The swallow and the cuckoo are generally hailed as harbingers of spring and summer, but, perhaps, many of our readers are not aware that it is only lucky to hear the cuckoo, for the first time in the season, upon soft ground in contradistinction to hard roads, and with money in the pocket, which the youngster is sagely advised to be sure then to turn over. Perhaps the season of the year may satisfactorily explain all these observances. Several superstitious customs are mentioned regarding bees, some of which are not practised in the north; yet it is fully believed that the death of the stock

of hives too often foretells the flitting of the bee-master. Wet cold years, unfavourable to the insects, are also equally so to the farmer upon thin clays, which border the moors, where bees are mostly kept. Has the use of the mountain ash, 'rowan tree' [Pyrus aucuparia, -Gaertner-,] as a charm against witchcraft, ever been accounted for? The belief in its efficacy must be very old if we are to credit some of Shakspeare's commentators, who give this word as the true reading in Macbeth, instead of 'Aroint thee, witch!'

"It often happens that the careless observer has, for the first time, his attention called forcibly to some appearance of nature by accidental circumstances: if at all superstitious, he immediately prognosticates the most disastrous consequences from that which a little observation would have convinced him was but a phenomenon

a little more conspicuous than usual. The northern lights are said to have caused much consternation when first observed; and they have lately been viewed with more than ordinary interest, as it appears from the -Newcastle Chronicle-, the last autumn (1830), when they were more than usually brilliant, some of the inhabitants of Weardale were convinced they saw, on one occasion, very distinctly, the figure of a man on a white horse, with a red sword in his hand, move across the heavens; and are, no doubt, now certain that it foretold the present eventful times. Even this belief may be accounted for on such accidental coincidences, or even philosophically, by assuming as a fact that this phenomenon is the result of an electrical change in the atmosphere, and that such a change usually precedes rain. Now, if such happen in spring or in summer, and before such a quantity of

rain as is found to affect the harvest, it may too often betoken scarcity, discontent, and turbulence, as such are the times when all grievances, either real or imaginary, are brought forward for redress. The origin of the superstition of sailors, of nailing a horse-shoe to the mast, is to me unaccountable, unless it may have been, like the following trial of the credulity of the superstitious by some person for amusement:– Sailors sometimes make a considerable pecuniary sacrifice for the acquisition of a child's caul, the retaining of which is to infallibly preserve them from drowning.

"Some years ago, a pretty wide district was alarmed by an account of the beans [Faba vulgaris var. equina] being laid the wrong way in the pod that year, which most certainly foreboded something terrible to happen in a short time, and this produced much consternation

amongst those who allow their imaginations to run riot. The whole of the terrible omen was this: the eye of the bean was in the pod towards the apex, instead of being towards the footstalk, as might appear at first sight to be its natural position; and some were scarcely convinced that this was the natural position of the beans in the pod ever since the creation, even on being shown the pod of the preceding year with the seed in the same position.

”As yet, however, I fear we must sum up in the words of Davy:–

”-Phys.- But how can you explain such absurdities as Friday being an unlucky day, and the terror of spilling salt, or meeting an old woman?

”-Poiet-. These, as well as the omens of death-watches, dreams, etc. are founded upon some accidental coincidences; but spilling of salt, on

an uncommon occasion, may, as I have known it, arise from a disposition to apoplexy, shown by an incipient numbness in the hand, and may be a fatal symptom; and persons dispirited by bad omens sometimes prepare the way for evil fortune, for confidence of success is a great means of insuring it. The dream of Brutus before the battle of Philippi probably produced a species of irresolution and despondency which was the principal cause of his losing the battle; and I have heard that the illustrious sportsman, to whom you referred just now, was always observed to shoot ill, because he shot carelessly, after one of his dispiriting omens.

"-Hal.- I have in life met with a few things which I have found it impossible to explain, either by chance coincidences, or by natural connections, and I have known minds of a very superior class affected by them–persons in the

habit of reasoning deeply and profoundly."

The number of remarkable events that happened on some particular days, have been the principal means of confirming both pagans and Christians in their opinions on this subject. For instance, Alexander who was born on the sixth of April, conquered Darius, and died on the same day. The Emperor Basianus Caracalla was born, and died on the sixth day of April. Augustus was adopted on the 19th of August, began his consulate, conquered the Triumviri, and died the same day. The christians have observed that the 24th of February was four times fortunate to Charles the fifth. That Wednesday was a fortunate day to Pope Sixtus the fifth; for on a Wednesday he was born, on that day made a monk, on the same day made a general of his order, on that day created a Cardinal, on that day elected Pope, and also on that day

inaugurated. That Thursday was a fatal day to Henry the eighth, King of England, and his posterity, for he died on a thursday; King Edward the sixth on a Thursday; Queen Mary on a Thursday; and Queen Elizabeth on a Thursday.

The French have observed that the feast of Pentecoste had been lucky to Henry III, King of France for on that day he was born, on that day elected King of Poland, and on that day he succeeded his brother Charles IX, on the throne of France.

There are critical days observed by physicians, in continued fevers, a doctrine which has been confirmed by the united testimony of De Haen and Cullen; and these are the 3rd. 5th. 7th. 9th. 11th. 14th. 17th. and 20th. By critical days are meant, any of the above days, on which the fever abates or terminates favourably, or on which it is exacerbated or terminates fa-

tally.

Natural astrology is confined to the study of exploring natural effects, in which sense it is admitted to be a part of natural philosophy. It was under this view that Mr. Goad, Mr. Boyle, and Dr. Mead, pleaded for its use. The first endeavours to account for the diversity of seasons from the situations, habitudes and motions of the planets: and to explain an infinity of phenomena by the contemplation of the stars. The Honourable Mr. Boyle admitted, that all physical bodies are influenced by the heavenly bodies; and Doctor Mead's opinion, in his treatise concerning the power of the sun and moon, etc. is in favour of the doctrine. But these predictions and influences are ridiculed and entirely exploded by the most esteemed modern philosophers, of which the reader may have a learned specimen in Rohault's, Tractat. Physic,

part II. c. 27.

The diseases of men, women, and children were supposed at times to be more immediately caused by the influence of the seven planets. In order to comprehend this exploded doctrine, we shall here set down the pretended governing and days, at what time they are supposed to have the most influence:

[Symbol: Sol] Sol, or the sun governs on Sunday. [Symbol: Luna] Luna, or the moon, Monday. [Symbol: Mars] Mars, Tuesday. [Symbol: Mercury] Mercury, Wednesday. [Symbol: Jupiter] Jupiter, Thursday, [Symbol: Venus] Venus. Friday. [Symbol: Saturn] Saturn, Saturday.

Saturn reigning, is said to cause cold diseases, as the gout, leprosy, palsy, quartan agues, dropsies, catarrhs, colds, rheumatisms, etc.

Jupiter causes cramps, numbness, inflammations of the liver, head-aches, pains in the

shoulders, flatulency, inflammatory fevers, and all diseases caused by putrefaction, apoplexy, and quinsies.

Mars, acute fevers and tartan agues, continual and intermitting fevers, imposthumes, erisepelas, carbuncles, fistulas, dysentery, and similar hot and dry diseases.

Sol causes rheums in the eyes, coldness in the stomach and liver, syncope, catarrhs, pustular eruptions, hysterics, eruptions on the lower extremities.

Venus causes sores, lientery, hysteria, sickness at the stomach, from cold and moist causes, disorders of the liver and lungs.

Mercury causes hoarseness and distempers in the senses, impediments in the speech, falling sickness, coughs, jaundice, vomiting, catarrhs.

The moon causes palsy, cholic, dropsy, imposthumes, dysenteries, and all diseases aris-

ing from obstructed circulation.

The means laid down for the prevention of these diseases are rational enough, at least some of them, such as temperance, moderate bleeding (whether or not indicated we are not told,) the use of laxatives at seasonable times, when a friendly planet, opposite to the malignant planet you were born under, has dominion, by which the effect of its influence will be much abated, and a power given to nature to oppose its malevolency, which, "if well heeded, may be a main prevention of dangerous diseases." Thus every planet in the heavens carries with it a diseased aspect, without, as it would appear, possessing any repelling or sanative powers to correct or ward off the sickly influence it is supposed to entertain over the life and limbs of frail mortals; that, in the sense of this absurd doctrine, or rather jargon, when Jupiter has dominion,

it will be necessary to bleed and take calomel to guard against (not to attack it when it has taken place) inflammation of the liver; and when Mars presides, to send immediately for Van Butchel to frighten away an imaginary fistula–absurd and ridiculous nonsense, too prevalent even at the present day; for what can bleeding and physicking at the spring and fall of the year be called but operations without reason, under supposititious stellar influence. "Observe also to gather all your physic herbs in the hour of the friendly planet, that temporises with what you were born under, and in so doing they will have more strength, power, and virtue to operate in the medicines; but neither physic nor bleed on the third of January, the last of April, the first of July, the first of August, and the last and second day of October; for those astrologers, with whom physicians join, conclude it perilous, by rea-

son of the bad influence then reigning; and if it change not the distemper into another worse, it will augment it, and put the party in great danger of death, -if he or she in this case be not lucky to escape-." It would be a waste of words to offer a single comment on such egregious stuff–"do not bleed on the third of January," nor on such and such a day, (as if there could be stated times for bleeding beyond those which are indicated by the presence of disease, and requiring such evacuation,) is a practice we believe peculiar only to astrologers, and those who believe in such demonological cant. It is no less, however, a singular fact that men distinguished in every other respect for their learning, should most particularly have indulged in the superstition of judicial astrology. At the present time a belief in such subjects can only exist with those who may be said to have no be-

lief at all; for mere traditional sentiments can hardly be said to amount to a belief.

It was astronomy that gave rise to judicial astrology, which, offering an ample field to enthusiasm and imposture, was eagerly pursued by many who had no scientific purpose in view. It was connected with various juggling tricks and deceptions, affected an obscure jargon of language, and insinuated itself into every thing in which the hopes and fears of mankind were concerned. The professors of this pretended science were at first generally persons of mean education, in whom low cunning supplied the place of knowledge. Most of them engaged in the empirical practice of physic, and some through the credulity of the times, even arrived at a degree of eminence in it; yet although the whole foundation of their art was folly and deceit, they nevertheless gained many proselytes and dupes,

both among the well-informed and the ignorant.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, the passion for horoscopes and expounding the stars prevailed in France among people of the first rank. The new-born child was usually presented naked to the star-expounder, who read the first lineaments on its forehead, and the transverse lines in its hands, and thence wrote down its future destiny. It has been reported of several persons famous for their astrological skill, that they have suffered a voluntary death merely to verify their own predictions. It is curious to observe the shifts to which these wise men were frequently put when their predictions were not verified. Great winds at one time were predicted by a famous adept in the art, but no unusual storms having happened, to save the reputation of the art, the pre-

diction was applied figuratively to some revolutions in the state, of which there were instances enough at that time.

The life of the famous Lilly the astrologer, and the Sidrophel of Butler, written by himself, is a curious work, containing much artless narrative, but at the same time, so much palpable imposture, that it is difficult to know when he is speaking what he really believes to be the truth. In a sketch of the state of astrology in his day, the adepts whose characters he has drawn were the lowest miscreants of the town. They all, indeed, speak of each other as rogues and impostors; among whom were Booker, George Wharton, and Gadbury, who gained a livelihood by practising on the credulity of even men of learning so late as 1650 to the 18th century. In Ashmole's life an account of these artful impostors may be read. Most of them had taken

the air in the pillory, and others had conjured themselves up to the gallows.

To the astrologers of the 17th century, the quacks and impostors of the beginning of the 19th are only equal. Quackery and astrology, the latter of which often served as a mask to the former, appear to have been at one time a kind of Castor and Pollux; quackery, however, it would seem has outlived astrology, for there are more who would swallow the nostrum of the quack than the flatulent bolus of the fortune-tellers. Both still have their votaries. One Grigg, a poulterer in Surrey, was set in the pillory at Croyden, (Temp. Edw. IV,) and again in the Borough, for cheating people out of their money by pretending to cure them with charms, by simply looking at the patients, or by practices still more absurd and questionable. Of such doctors there is no lack. This kind of prac-

tice offers one of the finest fields for deception of any species of empirical delusion held out to the public at the present day. Such indeed is the infatuation and credulity of the ignorant that, we are confidently assured, a notorious German quack had within one year so many half-guinea applications that he netted L2000; and that the glass bottles in which the precious nostrums were conveyed from the sanctum sanctorum of the mendacious empiric in high Germany, who made his debut in this country by hawking about Dutch drops, amounted to as many two-pences. To those of either sex, who are weak-minded enough to trust their lives to the rash artifices of an ignorant pretender who affects to discover an occult quality in the constitution of the patient denoting the existence of some internal complaint beyond that which less equivocal symptoms sufficiently present

to the eye and knowledge of the regular practitioner–we can only say that we conceive them to be justly punished in the loss of their money, and the consequent ruin of their health.

In Stow's Chronicle we find that one of these said gentlemen was set on horseback, his face towards the tail, which he held in his hand in the manner of a bridle, while with a collar significative of his offence, dangling about his neck, he made a public entree into the city of London, conducted by Jack Ketch, who afterwards did himself the honour of scourging and branding the impostor, previous to banishment, which completed his sentence. In the reign of James I, a terrible sweep was made among the quacks and advertising gentry. The council dispatched a warrant to the magistrates of the city of London, to take up all reputed quacks, and bring them before the censors of the college, to ex-

amine how properly qualified they were to be trusted, either with the limbs or lives of his majesty's lieges. This is all that is required at the present day. Let the legislature controul this department instead of the college of physicians, who, as a body, can boast of as large an allowance of licensed ignorance as any corporate set of men in existence. We say nothing of surgery, for this branch of knowledge leaves the world generally something to look at, hence so few pretenders to it; but physic buries all its blemishes with the unfortunate victim.

The country, even in this age of progressing wisdom, is deluged with quack medicines, which credulous people say are not directed against the constitution, but only against the pocket, and that they are too insipid to do either good or harm; but were this the case, there would have been no occasion for the exemplary pun-

ishments with which it is recorded quacks of all sorts have at various times been visited. Be it known, there can be no such thing invented by man as an universal remedy to prevent or cure all kinds of diseases; because that which would agree with one constitution would disagree with another differently organised; and a quack nostrum, such as we see daily advertised, may certainly agree at one stage of a disease, but might go far in killing the patient at another. Besides, all these boasted specifics have been found to be either inert, ineffectual, or dangerous, and every pretender to them, in times less enlightened by the general march of intellect, has been convicted either of gross ignorance or dishonesty. No one can vouch with certainty for any particular kind of medicine,– that it will agree with this or that individual, until acquainted with his peculiar constitution;

consequently it is the height of absurdity to prescribe physic for a man without a knowledge of such circumstances to direct him. Amulets, talismans, charms, and incantations, are innocent and innoxious, and may impose only on credulity without any other untoward consequence, leaving the patient in the same state in which he was found; but so much cannot be said for quacks and quack-medicines which frequently remove their deluded victims far beyond the reach of either physic or philosophy.

Butler is said to be the author of the following character of a quack; and who can read it without being astonished at the prophetic intelligence with which it abounds, and which, unfortunately, admits of a too close analogy with some very recent and untoward events, in the annals of modern empiricism. "He is a medicine-monger, probationer of receipts, and Doctor Epi-

demic; he is perpetually putting his medicines upon their trial, and very often finds them GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER, but still they have some trick or other to come off, and avoid burning by the hand of the hangman. He prints his trials of skill, and challenges death at so many several weapons; that, though he is sure to be foiled by every one, he cares not: for, -if he can but get money, he is sure to get off-; for it is but posting up diseases for poltroons in all the public places of the town, and daring them to meet him again, and his credit stands as fair with the rabble, as ever it did. He makes nothing * * * * * * * * * * * *;–but will undertake to cure them and tie one hand behind him, with so much ease and freedom, that his patients may surfeit and get drunk as often as they please, and follow their business without any inconvenience to their health or occasions; and recover

with so much secrecy, that they shall never know how it comes about. He professes ”no cure no pay,” as well he may, for if nature does the work, he is paid for it; if not, he neither wins nor loses; and like a cunning rook lays his bets so artfully, that, let the chance be what it will, he either wins or saves. He cheats the rich for their money, and the poor for charity, and, if either succeed, both are pleased, and he passes for a very just and conscientious man: for as those that pay nothing ought at least to speak well of their entertainments, their testimony makes way for those who are able to pay for both. He finds he has no reputation among those that know him, and fears he is never like to have, and, therefore, posts up his bills, to see if he can thrive better amongst those who know nothing of him. He keeps his post continually, and will undertake to maintain it against

all the plagues of Egypt. He sets up his trade upon a pillar, or the corner of a street–These are his warehouses, where all he has is to be seen, and a great deal more; for he that looks further finds nothing at all."

ABSURDITIES OF PARACELSUS, AND VAN HELMONT.

Although some of the first chemists were men of sense and learning, yet after that chemistry began to be fashionable and much in vogue, there were some of its professors, who although men of an uncommon turn of genius, were as great enthusiasts, both in the chemical and medical arts, as any other men ever were in religion. They not only pretended to transmute some of

the baser metals into gold, contrary to the nature of things–and if they could have succeeded in that impossible work, it would have rendered gold as plentiful, cheap, and less valuable than iron, because it is less fit for instruments and mechanical uses–but they also pretended infallibly to cure all diseases, by some of their new invented chemical machines;–a thing equally as impossible as the other, and shewed their ignorance of the causes and nature of diseases. As those who are the most ignorant are generally the greatest boasters, we find that none of them were more so, than that vain, boasting, paradoxical enthusiast Paracelsus, who had acquired great riches by curing a certain disease with a mercurial ointment, the knowledge of which secret he is said to have stolen from Jacobus Berengarius, of Caipo, in his travels thither. He was withal so illiterate, that he said philoso-

phy could be taught in no language but high Dutch; but the true reason was, that he neither understood philosophy nor any other language. He also boasted that he was in possession of a nostrum which would prolong man's life to the age of Methusaleh, though he died himself at the age of forty-seven. He lived in the fifteenth century. The cures he wrought were deemed so surprising in that age, that he was supposed to have recourse to supernatural aid. In a picture of him at Lumley Castle, he is represented in a close black gown, with both hands on a great sword, on whose hilt is inscribed the word Azot. This was the name of his -familiar- spirit, that he kept imprisoned in the pummel, to consult on emergent occasions. The circumstance is thus alluded to by Butler:–

Bombastes kept the Devil's Bird Shut in the pummel of his sword; And taught him all the

cunning pranks, Of past and future mountebanks.

Paracelsus was succeeded by his scholar van Helmont, who had much more learning, but was as great an enthusiast, both in the chemical and medical arts as his master, and embraced most of his paradoxical opinions; and, having more technical terms, he frequently used them rather to dazzle and confound the understandings of his readers, than to inform their judgments. By thus giving his writings a mystical air of wisdom, he rendered them obscure, and sometimes unintelligible; consequently, more easily imposed them upon the public and vulgar, as sublime and useful truths. He also vainly boasted that he could cure any fever in four days' time, by sweating the patient with one draught of his famous nostrum, the -Praecipitatus Diaphoreticus Paracelsi-; and further adds, "that

no man can deserve the name of a physician, who cannot cure any fever in four days' time." He, however, admits, that he sometimes added a little theriaca (treacle) and wine to it; which last, he says, "is not only a great cordial, but as a vehicle, is a proper messenger to be sent on such an errand, as it knows the road, is well received wherever it goes, and readily admitted into the most private apartments of the human body." Hence we believe that wine is not only a good natured, but an intelligent being; though it sometimes deprives men of their senses for a time, when they take too much of it: and hence we see also a specimen of our author's method of reasoning and writing.

Van Helmont, like his great master, also boasted, that he could cure all inflammatory and other fevers, and even a pleurisy, without either bleeding, vomiting, purging, clysters, or blisters; and

he quarrelled so much with the two last, that he calls clysters "a beastly remedy," and says that blisters were invented by a wicked spirit, whom he calls Moloz, though Beelzebub might have been as good a name, since Dr. Baynard wittily observed, that he believed he was only a great cantharid. And both Helmont and the Doctor were so far right, that blistering was then, as well as now, much abused; and in truth they are much oftener applied than is either necessary or useful.

Thus these two eminent chemists, and too many of their followers, frequently imposed their writings upon the unguarded reader, and themselves upon the vulgar, for men of profound knowledge in the medical art, and as great adepts in chemistry: and being puffed up with the high opinion entertained of their new art, or new medicines, and their own great wisdom, they

rejected the philosophical theory of medicine by Galen and Avicenna, then so much in vogue. They were right in doing this, and might have done great service to mankind, if they had not set up their own imaginary chemical theory in its place, which was neither founded upon observations, nature, nor reason, and had no existence but in their own vain imaginations. Thus they supposed a malignity which caused all diseases, as well inflammatory as other fevers, and which was to be forced out of the body by sweating, with their hot therapeutics; they, therefore, attacked all fevers with this chemical ammunition, and attempted to carry them with fire and storm, prescribing the praecipitatus diaphoreticus and sweating regimen, which must have been fatal to many, and no doubt would have been so to many more, if van Helmont had not allowed his patients to dilute the medicine

with a thin diet, which rendered the calorific method less fatal. But, as the learned Dr. Friend judiciously remarks, if any did escape after that hot regimen, it was through a fiery trial.

Thus the chemists, without any rational theory, or regard to nature, and what she indicated or did;–without duly considering how the morbid matter, which caused the disease, was to be concocted and fitted to be carried off by some critical evacuation; or how to assist nature to bring that crisis on, according to the Hippocratic method;–without considering the benefit of the rational, cooling, antiphlogistic practice of the Arabians–they introduced their sudorific regimen instead; and this regimen was soon after brought into use in England, and most other countries, where it continued to be the practice for many years afterwards, as may be seen by the authors of those times, until the judicious

and honest Dr. Sydenham wisely rejected and exploded it, introducing the rational method of Hippocrates and the cooling regimen of the Arabians, which he seems rather to have taken -ex ipsa re et ratione- from nature and reason, than from the works of the Arabian physicians, with which he appears not to have been acquainted, as he never mentions them.

Van Helmont had several other famous nostrums, with which he pretended to perform wonders, as quacks have done in all ages, and as some do now: for empiricism was never more in fashion than at the present day, and the chemical art has supplied them with many more arcana and nostrums than the ancients had in all their antidotes and theriacas, etc. since chemistry was made subservient to medicine. Van Helmont, nevertheless was a learned man, and acquired a great name and reputation, at least

for some time; but, as neither his theory nor his practice were founded on nature and reason, nor conformable to them, the more judicious physicians soon saw their errors, as well as the fallacy of his new invented chemical terms and unmeaning phrases, which only contained the shadow and not the substance of the medical science; therefore both his chemical theory and hot regimen, together with his writings, sunk soon after his death, into a state of merited oblivion.

Notwithstanding that the science of chemistry was greatly improved by these extraordinary men, who invented or discovered many useful remedies, which they introduced into the practice of medicine in a no less extraordinary manner, and thereby pointed out the way for others to follow them; yet we must allow that the more able and learned chemists have greatly

enriched and improved the materia medica since, by making many curious experiments, and thereby discovering several new and very efficacious medicines, not only from the semi-metals, mercury and antimony, and the various chemical preparations from them, but from the more perfect metals, and some other mineral bodies, as well as from a great variety of remedies which are prepared both from vegetable and animal substances, as salts, oils, essences, spirits, tinctures, elixirs, extracts and many more needless here to be mentioned, but all of which are known to physicians. For all these we are indebted to the chemists who first invented and introduced them into practice; although the use and application, as well as the methods of administering them to the sick, to cure various other diseases than those they were first used for, has been greatly improved by several learned and ingenious physi-

cians.

FOOTNOTES:

[142] See Demonologia, by J.S.F. p. 40.

[143] See Magazine of Natural History, April, 1830.

XXI. MODERN EMPIRICISM.

In one respect we have but very little occasion to extol our own enlightened age at the expence of those ages which are so frequently and justly termed -dark-. We allude to the bold and artful designs of imposture, and particularly -medical imposture-. Daily are seen illiterate and audacious empirics sporting with the lives of a credulous public, that seem obstinately resolved to shut their ears against all the suggestions of reason and experience. The host of empirics,

mountebanks, and self-dubbed hygeists, which infest the metropolis, and the tinctures, cordials, pills, balms, and essences, so much extolled by their retailers, and swallowed by the public, are indeed so many proofs of the credulity of the age, that to say the least, the march of intellect has evidently made a -faux-pas- in this direction.

The celestial beds, the enchanting magnetic powers introduced into this country by Messmer, a German quack, and his numerous disciples, the prevailing indifference to all dietetic precepts, the singular imposition practised on many females, in persuading them to wear the inert acromatic belts, the strange infatuation of the opulent in paying five guineas for a pair of -metallic tractors-, not worth sixpence, the tables for blood-letting, and other absurdities still inserted in popular almanacs, (against all the

rules of common sense)–all these yield in nothing to the absurdities and superstitious notions conveyed through the medium of astrology, dreams, and other ludicrous though by far more imposing and interesting channels. The temple of the gulls is now thronged with votaries as much as that of superstition formerly was; human reason is still a slave to the most tyrannical prejudices; and certainly, there is no ready way to excite general attention and admiration, than to deal in the mysterious and the marvellous. The visionary system of Jacob Boehman has latterly been revived in some parts of Germany. The ghosts and apparitions which had disappeared from the times of Thomasius and Swedenborg, have again left their graves, to the great terror of fanaticism. New prophets announce their divine mission, and, what is worse, find implicit believers! The -inventors- of -secret-

medicines are rewarded by patents, and obtain no small celebrity; while some of the more conscientious, but less fortunate adepts, endeavour to amuse the public with popular systems of medicine.

One of the most dazzling and successful inventors in modern times, was Messmer, who commenced his career of medical knight-errantry at Vienna. His house was the focus of high life, the rendezvous of the gay, where the young and opulent were enlivened and entertained with continual concerts, routs, and illuminations. At a great expence, he imported into Germany the first -Harmonica- from this country: he established cabinets of natural curiosities, and laboured constantly and secretly in his chemical laboratory; so that he acquired the reputation of being a great alchemist, a philosopher studiously employed in the most useful and important re-

searches. In 1766, he first publicly announced the object and nature of his secret labours:–all his discoveries centered in the -magnet-, which, according to his hypothesis, was the best and safest remedy hitherto proposed against all diseases incident to the human body.

This declaration of Messmer excited very general attention; the more so as about the same time he established a hospital in his own house, into which he admitted a number of patients -gratis-. Such disinterestedness procured, as might be expected, no small addition to his fame. He was, besides, fortunate in gaining over many celebrated physicians to his opinions, who lavished the greatest encomiums on his new art, and were instrumental in communicating to the public a number of successful experiments. This seems to have surpassed the expectations of Messmer, and induced him to extend his orig-

inal plan further than it is likely he first intended. We find him soon after assuming a more dogmatical and mysterious air, when, for the purpose of shining exclusively, he appeared in the character of a -magician-:–his pride and egotism would brook neither equal nor competitor.

The common loadstone, or mineral magnet, which is so well known, did not appear to him sufficiently important and mysterious–he contrived an unusual one, to the effect of which he gave the name of '-animal magnetism-'. After this, he proceeded to a still holder assumption, everywhere giving it out, that the inconceivable powers of this subtile fluid were centered in his own person. Now, the mona-drama began; and Messmer, at once the hero and chorus of the piece, performed his part in a masterly manner. He placed the most nervous, hysteric, and

hypocondriac patients opposite to him; and by the sole act of stretching forth his finger, he made them feel the most violent shocks. The effects of this wonderful power excited universal astonishment; its activity and penetration being confirmed by unquestionable testimonies, from which it appeared, that blows similar to those given by a blunt iron, could be imparted by the operator, while he himself was separated by two doors, nay, even by thick walls. The very looks of this prince of jugglers had the power to excite painful cramps and twitches in his credulous and predisposed patients.

This wonderful tide of success instigated his indefatigable genius to bolder attempts, especially as he had no severe criticism to apprehend from the superstitious multitude. He roundly asserted things of which he offered not the least shadow of proof; and for the truth of which he

had no other pledge to offer but his own high reputation. At one time he could communicate his magnetic power to paper, wool, silk, bread, leather, stones, water, etc., at another he asserted that certain individuals possessed a greater degree of susceptibility for this power than others. It must be owned, however, that many of his contemporaries made it their business to encounter his extravagant pretensions, and refute his dogmatical assertions with the most convincing arguments. Yet, he long enjoyed the triumph of being supported by blind followers, and their increasing number completely overpowered the suffrages of reason.

Messmer, at length perceived that in his native country, he should never be able to reach the point which he had fixed upon, as the termination of his magnetical career. The Germans began to discredit his pompous claims;

but it was only after repeated failures in some promised cures, that he found himself under the necessity of seeking protection in Paris. There he met with a most flattering reception, being caressed, and in a manner adored by a nation which has always been extravagantly fond of every new thing, whimsical and mysterious. Messmer well knew how to turn this natural propensity to the best advantage. He addressed himself particularly to the weak; to such as wished to be considered men of profound knowledge, but who, when they were compelled to be silent from real ignorance, took refuge behind the impenetrable shield of mystery. The fashionable levity, the irresistible curiosity, and the peculiar turn of the Parisians, ever solicitous to have something interesting for conversation, to keep their active imagination in play, were exactly suited to the genius and talents

of the inventor of animal magnetism. We need not wonder, therefore, if he availed himself of their moral and physical character, to ensure a ready faith in his doctrines, and success to his pretended experiments: in fact, he found friends and admirers wherever he made his appearance. His first advertisement was couched in the following high-sounding terms:

"Behold a discovery which promises unspeakable advantages to the human race, and immortal fame to its author! Behold the dawn of an universal revolution! A new race of men shall arise, shall overspread the earth, to embellish it by their virtues, and render it fertile by their industry. Neither vice nor ignorance, shall stop their active career; they will know our calamities only from the records of history. The prolonged duration of their life will enable them to plan and accomplish the most laudable

undertakings. The tranquil, the innocent gratifications of that primeval age will be restored, wherein man laboured without toil, lived without sorrow, and expired without a groan! Mothers will no longer be subject to pain and danger during their pregnancy and child-birth: their progeny will be more robust and brave; the now rugged and difficult path of education will be rendered smooth and easy; and hereditary complaints and diseases will be for ever banished from the future auspicious race. Fathers rejoicing to see their posterity of the fourth and fifth generations, will only drop like fruit fully ripe, at the extreme point of age! Animals and plants, no less susceptible of the magnetic power than man, will be exempt from the reproach of barrenness and the ravages of distemper. The flocks in the fields, and the plants in the gardens, will be more vigorous and nourishing, and

the trees will bear more beautiful and grateful fruits. The human race, once endowed with this elementary power, will probably rise to still more sublime and astonishing effects of nature: who indeed is able to pronounce, with certainty, how far this salutary influence may extend?"

"What splendid promises! What rich prospects! Messmer, the greatest of philosophers, the most virtuous of men, the physician of mankind, charitably opens his arms to all his fellow-mortals, who stand in need of comfort and assistance. No wonder that the cause of magnetism, under such a zealous apostle, rapidly gained ground, and obtained every day large additions to the number of its converts. To the gay, the nervous, and the dissipated of all ranks and ages, it held out the most flattering promises. Men of the first respectability interested themselves in behalf of this new philosophy; they antici-

pated in idea, the more happy and more vigorous race which would proceed, as it were, by enchantment, from the wonderful impulsive powers of animal magnetism. The French were so far seduced by these flattering appearances, as to offer the German adventurer -thirty thousand livres- for the communication of his secret art. He appears, however, to have understood his own interest better than thus to dispose of his hypothetical property, which, upon a more accurate investigation might be objected to, as consisting of unfair articles of purchase. He consequently returned the following answer to the credulous French ministers:

"That Dr. M. considered his art of too great importance, and the abuses it might lead to, too dangerous for him at present to make it public; that he must therefore reserve to himself the time of its publication, and mode of introduc-

ing it to general use and observation–that he would first take proper measures to initiate or prepare the minds of men, by exciting in them a susceptibility of this great power; and that he would then undertake to communicate his secret gradually, which he meant to do without hope of reward."

Messmer, too politic to part with his secret for so small a premium, had a better prospect in view; and his apparent disinterestedness and hesitation served only to sound an over-curious public, to allure more victims to his delusive practices, and to retain them more firmly in their implicit belief. Soon after this he was easily prevailed upon to institute a private society, into which none were admitted, but such as bound themselves by a vow to perpetual secrecy. These pupils he agreed to instruct in his important mysteries, on condition of each

paying him -one hundred louis-. In the course of six months, having had not less than three hundred such pupils, he realized a fortune of -thirty thousand louis-.

It appears, however, that the disciples of Messmer did not adhere to their engagement: we find them separating gradually from their professor, and establishing schools for the propagation of his system, with a view, no doubt, to reimburse themselves for the expenses of their own initiation into the magnetising art. But few of them having understood the terms and mysterious doctrines of their foreign master, every new adept exerted himself to excel his fellow-labourers, in additional explanations and inventions: others, who did not possess, or could not spare the sum of one hundred louis, were industriously employed in attempts to discover the secret, by their own ingenuity; and thus

arose a great variety of magnetical sects. At length, however, Messmer's authority became suspected; his pecuniary acquisitions were now notorious, and our -humane and disinterested philosopher- was assailed with critical and satirical animadversions from every quarter. The fertility of his process for medical purposes, as well as the bad consequences it might procure in a moral point of view, soon became topics of common conversation, and ultimately even excited the apprehensions of government. One dangerous effect of magnetical associations was, that young voluptuaries began to employ this art, to promote their libidinous and destructive designs.

Matters having assumed this serious aspect, the French government, much to its credit, deputed four respectable and unprejudiced men, to whom were afterwards added four others of

great learning and abilities, to inquire into, and appreciate the merits of the new discovery of animal magnetism. These philosophers, among whom we find the illustrious names of Franklin and Lavoisier, recognised, indeed, very surprising and unexpected phenomena in the physical state of magnetized individuals; but they gave it as their opinion, that the powers of imagination, and not animal magnetism, had produced these effects. Sensible of the superior influence, which the imagination can exert on the human body, when it is effectually wrought upon, they perceived, after a number of experiments and facts frequently repeated, that -contact-, or touch, -imagination, imitation-, and -excited sensibility-, were the real and sole causes of these phenomena, which had so much confounded the illiterate, the credulous, and the enthusiastic; that this boasted magnetic element had

no real existence in nature, consequently that Messmer himself was either an arrant impostor, or a deluded fanatic.

Meantime, this magnetic mystery had made no small progress in Germany. A number of periodical and other publications vindicated its claims to public favour and attention; and some literary men, who had rendered themselves justly celebrated by their former writings, now stepped forward as bold and eager champions in support of this mystical doctrine. The ingenious Lavater undertook long journies for the propagation of magnetism and somnambulism:[144] and what, manipulations and other absurdities were not practised on hysterical young ladies in the city of Bremen? It is farther worthy of notice, that an eminent physician of that place, in a recent publication, does not scruple to rank magnetism among medical remedies! It must,

nevertheless, be confessed, that the great body of the learned, throughout Germany, have endeavoured, by strong and impartial criticism, to oppose and refute animal magnetism, considered as a medical system. And how should it be otherwise, since it is highly ridiculous to imagine that violent agitations, spasms, convulsions, etc. which are obviously symptoms of a diseased state of body, and which must increase rather than diminish the disposition to nervous diseases, can be the means of improving the constitution and ultimately of prolonging human life? Every attentive person must have observed, that too frequent intercourse between nervous and hypochondriac patients is infectious; and if this be the case, public assemblies, for exhibiting magnetised individuals, can neither be safe nor proper. It is no small proof of the good sense of the people of

this country, though they have at different times fallen into nearly similar delusions, that the professors of animal magnetism did not long maintain their ground; they were soon exposed to public ridicule on the stage, and shortly became annihilated in their own absurdities.

Other plans for the prolongation of life, little less absurd than animal magnetism, which have, like every other imposture, "fretted their hour," deserve to be noticed. The French and Germans have long stood pre-eminent in the empirical world, though the merit of ingenious and more plausible emanations of genius may fairly be attributed to the latter. Animal magnetism; physiognomy, a rational though fallacious science; phrenology, a doctrine abounding with many singular manifestions, and possessing claims not to be put down by mere force of prejudice, are all of German origin.

The Count St. Germain, a Frenchman, realized large sums, by vending an artificial tea, chiefly composed of yellow saunders, senna leaves, and fennel seed, which was puffed off under the specious appellation of -Tea for prolonging life- ; which, at that time, was swallowed with such voracity all over the continent, that few could subsist without it. Its celebrity was of short duration, and none ever lived long enough to realize its effects.

The Chevalier d'Ailhoud, another brazen-faced adventurer, presented the world with a powder, which met with so large and rapid a sale, that he soon accumulated money enough to purchase a whole county. This famous powder, however, instead of adding to the means of securing a long and healthy life, is well known to produce constant indisposition, and at length to cause a most miserable death; being com-

posed of certain drugs of a poisonous nature, though slow in their operation.

Count Cagliostro, styled the luminary of modern impostors and debauchees, prepared a very common stomach elixir, which was sold at a most exorbitant price under the name of ”-balm of life-” It was pretended, with the most unparalleled effrontery, that, by the use of this medicine, the count had lived above 200 years, and that he was rendered invulnerable against every species of poison. These bold assertions could not fail to excite very general attention. During his residence at Strasburg, while descanting, in a large and respectable company, on the virtues of his antidote, his pride met with a very mortifying check. A physician who was present, and who had taken part in the conversation, quitting the room privately, went to an apothecary’s shop, and ordering two pills

of equal size to be made, agreeably to his directions, suddenly appeared again before the count, and thus addressed him:–"Here, my worthy count, are two pills; the one contains a mortal poison, the other is perfectly innocent; choose one of these and swallow it, and I engage to take that which you leave. This will be considered as a decisive proof of your medical skill, and enable the public to ascertain the efficacy of your extolled elixir." The count took the alarm, made a number of apologies, but could not be prevailed upon to touch the pills. The physician swallowed both immediately, and proved by his apothecary, that they might be taken with perfect safety, being only made of common bread. Notwithstanding the shame of this detection, Cagliostro still retained numerous advocates by circulating unfounded reports, and concealing his real character by a

variety of tricks.

The inspired father Gassner, of Bavaria, ascribed all diseases, lameness, palsy, etc, to diabolical agency, contending from the history of Job, Saul, and others recorded in sacred writ, that Satan, as the grand enemy of mankind, has a power to embitter and shorten our lives by diseases. Vast numbers of credulous and weak-minded people flocked to this fanatic, with a view of obtaining relief which he never had the means to administer. Multitudes of patients, afflicted with nervous and hypochondriacal complaints, besieged him daily; being all stimulated by a wild imagination, eager to view and acknowledge the works of Satan! Men eminent for their literary attainments, even the natural philosophers of Bavaria, were hurried away by the stream, and completely blinded by sanctified imposture.

It is no less astonishing than true, that so late as 1794, a Count Thun, at Leipzig, pretended to perform miraculous cures on gouty, hypochondriacal, and hysterical patients, merely by the imposition of his sacred hands. He could not however raise a great number of disciples in a place that abounds with so many sceptics and unbelievers.

The commencement of the nineteenth century has been equally pregnant with imposture. The delusions of Joanna Southcoat are too fresh in the recollections of our readers to require notice here; yet, strange to say, this fanatical old woman had her adherents and disciples; many of them, in other respects, were keen and sensible men; nor has the delusion altogether evaporated, though the sect is by no means powerful or strong; the first impressions are still retained by her half frantic and ridiculous devotees, who

are only to be met with among the very lowest and illiterate orders of society.

The farce of the convert of Newhall, near Chelmsford, is of still more recent date. Here we have a miracle performed by the holy Prince Hohenlohe, at a distance of at least three hundred miles from the presence of his patient. Hearing of the wonderful cures performed by this prince, one of the nuns in the above convent, who had been afflicted for a considerable length of time with a swelling and inflammation extending from the ball of the thumb along the fore arm, and up as high as the armpit, wrote to Prince Hohenlohe–having previously been attended by the most eminent practitioners in London without any apparent benefit–to relieve her from her sufferings. This he willingly undertook to do, but accompanied his consent with an injunction that she should offer up her prayers

on a certain day (May 3, 1824,) held in reverence by the catholics, and at a certain hour, promising that he would be at his devotions at the same time. All this, the afflicted nun attended to; immediately after her prayers, she experienced a tingling sensation along the arm, and from that instant the cure rapidly advanced until the diseased limb became as sound as the other.

The days of priestcraft and superstition, it was hoped, had been fast fleeting away before the luminous rays of science, even in those countries where religious juggling had been most fostered and practised. But for any man in this country to believe that such a miracle can be wrought by human agency, is of itself an awfully convincing proof that he is ignorant of the Scriptures, and that his own mind is likely to become a prey to the wildest chimeras. Prince

Hohenlohe's notoriety however as a worker of miracles was not confined to Newhall. His mighty prowess extended to the emerald isle; and several cures were performed at as great, or even at a greater distance, than that wrought at Newhall, and merely at the sound of his orisons. We hear of no miracles being wrought by, or upon protestants; consequently we leave them to the gloom of the cloister, whence they emanated, and where only they can be of use in a cause which requires the aid of stratagem to support it.

A taste for the marvellous seems to be natural to man in every stage of society, and at almost every period of life; it cannot, therefore, be much a matter of astonishment, that, from the earliest ages of the world, persons have been found, who, more idle and more ingenious than others, have availed themselves of this propen-

sity, to obtain an easy livelihood by levying contributions on the curiosity of the public. Whether this taste is to be considered as a proof of the weakness of our judgment, or of innate inquisitiveness, which stimulates us to enlarge the sphere of our knowledge, must be left to the decision of metaphysicians; it is sufficient for our present purpose to know that it gave rise to a numerous class of impostors in the shape of quacks, mountebanks, poison-swallowers, fire-eaters, and pill-mongers.

There is another class of adepts, such as sleight of hand performers, slack rope dancers, teachers of animals to perform extraordinary tricks; in short, those persons who delude the senses, and practise harmless deceptions on spectators, included under the common appellation of jugglers. If these arts served no other purpose than that of mere amusement, they yet

merit a certain degree of encouragement, as affording at once a cheap and innocent diversion; jugglers of this class frequently exhibit instructive experiments in natural philosophy, chemistry, and mechanics: thus the solar microscope was invented from an instrument to reflect shadows, with which a savoyard amused a German populace; and the celebrated Sir Richard Arkwright is said to have conceived the idea of the spinning machines, which have so largely contributed to the prosperity of the cotton manufactories in this country, from a toy which he purchased for his child from an itinerant showman. These deceptions have, besides, acted as an agreeable and most powerful antidote to superstition, and to that popular belief in miracles, conjuration, sorcery, and witchcraft, which preyed upon the minds of our ancestors; and the effects of shadows, electricity, mirrors, and

the magnet, once formidable instruments in the hands of interested persons, for keeping the vulgar in awe, have been stripped of their terrors, and are no longer frightful in their most terrific forms.

ON THE TRANSFUSION OP BLOOD FROM ONE ANIMAL TO ANOTHER.

At a time when the shortness of human life was imputed to a distempered state of the blood; when all diseases were ascribed to this cause, without attending to the whole of what relates

to the moral and physical nature of man, a conclusion was easily formed, that a radical removal of the corrupted blood, and a complete renovation of the entire mass by substitution was both practicable and effectual. The speculative mind of man was not at a loss to devise expedients, to effect this desirable purpose; and undoubtedly one of the boldest, most extraordinary, and most ingenious attempts ever made to lengthen the period of human life was made at this time. We allude here to the famous scheme of -transfusion-, or of introducing the blood of one animal into that of another. This curious discovery is attributed to Andreas Libavius, professor of medicine and chemistry in the university of Halle, who, in the year 1615, publicly recommended experimental essays to ascertain the fact.

Libavius was an honest and spirited opposer

of the Theosophic system, founded by the bombastic Paracelsus, and supported by a numerous tribe of credulous and frantic followers. Although he was not totally exempt from the follies of that age, since he believed in the transmutation of metals, and suggested to his pupils the wonderful power of potable gold, yet he distinguished rational alchemy from the fanatical systems then in repute, and zealously defended the former against the disciples of Galen, as well as those of Paracelsus. He made a number of important discoveries in chemistry, and was unquestionably the first professor in Germany who gave chemical lectures, upon pure principles of affinity, unconnected with the extravagant notions of the theosophists.

The first experiments relative to the transfusion of the blood, appear to have been made, and that with great propriety, on the lower an-

imals. The blood of the young, healthy and vigorous, was transferred into the old and infirm, by means of a delicate tube, placed in a vein opened for that purpose. The effect of this operation was surprising and important: aged and decrepit animals were soon observed to become more lively, and to move with greater ease and rapidity. By the indefatigable exertions of Lower, in England, of Dennis in France, and of Moulz, Hoffman, and others in Germany, this artificial mode of renovating the life and spirits was successfully continued, and even brought to some degree of perfection.

The vein usually opened in the arm of a patient was resorted to for the purpose of transfusion; into this a small tube was placed in a perpendicular direction; the same vein was then opened in a healthy individual, but more frequently in an animal, into which another tube

was forced in a reclining direction; both small tubes were then slid into one another, and in that position the delicate art of transfusion was safely performed. When the operation was completed, the vein was tied up in the same manner as on blood-letting. Sometimes a quantity of blood was drawn from the patient, previously to the experiment taking place. As few persons, however, were to be found, that would agree to part with their blood to others, recourse was generally had to animals, and most frequently to the calf, the lamb, and the stag. These being laid upon a table, and tied so as to be unable to move, the operation was performed in the manner before described. In some instances, the good effects of these experiments were evident and promising, while they excited the greatest hopes of the future improvement and progress of this new art. But the unceasing abuses prac-

tised by bold and inexpert adventurers, together with the great number of cases, which proved unsuccessful, induced the different governments of Europe to put an entire stop to the practice, by the strictest prohibitions. And, indeed, while the constitutions and mode of living among men differ so materially as they now do, this is, and ever must remain, an extremely hazardous and equivocal, if not a desperate remedy. The blood of every individual is of a peculiar nature, and congenial with that of the body only to which it belongs, and in which it is generated. Hence our hope of prolonging human life, by artificial evacuations and injections, must necessarily be disappointed. It must not, however, be supposed, that these, and similar pursuits during the ages of which we treat, as well as those which succeeded, were solely or chiefly followed by mere adventurers and fanatics. The great-

est geniuses of those times employed their wits with the most learned and eminent men, who deemed it an object by no means below their consideration.

The method of supplying good for unsound teeth, though long laid aside, in consequence of the danger with which the practice was attended, by the communication of disease from an unhealthy to a healthy person, was at one time as much the rage as the transfusion of blood. This practice, notwithstanding the objections which stand opposed to it, might, nevertheless, be adopted with success on many occasions, could persons enjoying a sound and wholesome state of body be found to answer the demand, however unnatural it may appear. A few untoward cases soon raised the hue and cry against the continuance of the practice, as in the transfusion of blood, though the latter

has recently been attempted in the case of an individual exhausted by excessive hermorrage with a success which answered the expectation. There is little doubt that both the transfusion of blood, and engrafting or transplanting of teeth, are capable, with judgment and discrimination, of being made subservient in a variety of cases; though the chances of general success militate against these experiments; for it is the unalterable plan of nature to proceed gradually in her operations; all outrage and extravagance being at variance with her established laws.

FOOTNOTES:

[144] The art of exciting sleep in persons under the influence of animal magnetism, with a view to obtain or rather extort during this artificial sleep, their verbal declarations and directions for curing the diseases of both body and mind. Such, indeed, was the rage for propagat-

ing this mystical nonsense, that even the pulpit was occasionally resorted to, in order to make, not fair penitents, but fair proselytes.

XXII. THE ROSICRUCIANS OR THEOSOPHISTS.

This remarkable sect was founded upon the doctrines of Paracelsus, during the latter part of the sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The society was known by the name of the Rosencrucians or Rosecrucians; and as it has not been without its followers and propagators in different shapes, even to the present time, we shall here present the reader

with a concise account of the origin and tenets of that fanatical sect.

The first intimation of the existence of this order we find announced to the world in a book published in the German language, in the year 1614, with the following title, ”-The universal and general Reformation of the world, together with an account of the famous fraternity of the Rosencrucians-.” The work contains an intimation, that the members of the society had been secretly engaged for a century preceding, and that they had come to the knowledge of many great and important secrets, which, if communicated to the world, would promote the happiness of man.

An adventurer of the name of Christian Rosenkreuz is said to have founded this order, in the fourteenth century after having been previously initiated in the sublime wisdom of the east, dur-

ing his travels in Egypt and Fez. From what we are enabled to learn from this work, the intention of the founder and the final aim of the society, appear to have been the accumulation of wealth and treasures, by means of secrets known only to the members; and by a proper distribution of these treasures among princes and potentates, to promote the grand scheme of the society, by producing "a general revolution of all things." In their "confession of faith," there are many bold and singular dogmas; among others, that the end of the world is at hand; that a general reformation of men and manners will speedily take place; that the wicked shall be expelled or subdued, the Jews converted, and the doctrine of Christ propagated over the whole earth. The Rosencrucians not only believed that these events must happen, but they also endeavoured to accelerate

them by unremitted exertions. To their faithful votaries and followers, they promised abundance of celestial wisdom, unspeakable riches, exemption from disease, an immortal state of man of ever blooming youth, and above all the -philosopher's stone-.

Learning and improvement of the mind were, by this order, considered as superfluous and despised. They found all knowledge in the Bible; this, however, has been supposed rather a pretext to obviate a charge, which was brought against them, of not believing in the Christian religion. The truth is, they imagined themselves superior to divine revelation, and supposed every useful acquisition, every virtue to be derived from the influence of the Deity on the soul of man. In this, as well as in many other respects, they appear to be followers of Paracelsus, whom they profess to revere as a Messen-

ger of the divinity. Like him, they pretend to cure all diseases; through -faith- and the power of the imagination, to heal the most mortal disorders by a touch, or even by simply looking at the patient. The universal remedy was likewise a grand secret of the order, the discovery of which was promised to all its faithful members.

It would be unnecessary to enumerate any more of such impious fancies, if the founder of this still lurking sect, now partly revivified, had not asserted, with astonishing effrontery, that human life was capable of prolongation, like a fire kept up by combustible matter, and that he was in the possession of a secret, which could verify this assertion. It is evident, however, from the testimony of Libavius, a man of unquestionable veracity, that this doughty champion in medical chemistry, or rather alchemy, Paracelsus, notwithstanding his bold assertions,

died as before observed, at Sulzburgh in Germany, in the Hospital of St. Stephen's in 1541: and that his death was chiefly occasioned by the singular and desolate mode of life, which he had for a long time pursued. When a competent knowledge of the economy of the human frame is wanting, to enable a man to discriminate between internal and external causes and effects, it will be impossible to ascertain, or to counteract, the different causes by which our health is deranged. This evidently was the case with Paracelsus, and many other life-prolongers who have succeeded him; and should a fortunate individual ever fix upon a remedy, possessing the power of checking disease, or lengthening out human existence (an expectation never to be realized) he will be indebted to chance alone for the discovery. This has been the case in all ages, and still remains so.

Remedies, from time to time, have been devised, not merely to serve as nostrums for all diseases, but also for the pretended purpose of prolonging life. Those of the latter kind have been applied with a view to resist or check many operations of nature, which insensibly consume the vital heat, and other powers of life, such as respiration, muscular irritation, etc. Thus, from the implicit credulity of some, and the exuberant imagination of others, observation and experiments, however incompatible with sound reason and philosophy, have been multiplied, with the avowed design of establishing proofs, or reputations of this or that absurd opinion. In this manner have fanaticism and imposture falsified the plainest truths, or forged the most unfounded and ridiculous claims; insomuch that one glaring inconsistency has been employed to combat another, and folly has succeeded folly,

till a fund of materials has been transmitted to posterity, sufficient to form a concise history on this subject. Men in all ages have set a just value on life; and in proportion to the means of enjoyment, this value has been appreciated in a greater or less degree. If the gratification of the sensual appetite formed the principal object of living, its prolongation would be to the epicure, as desirable as the prospect of an existence to be enjoyed beyond the limits of the grave, is to the moralist and the believer.

The desire of longevity appears to be inherent in all animated nature, and particularly in the human race; it is intimately cherished by us, through the whole duration of our existence, and is frequently supported and strengthened, not only by justifiable means, but also by various kinds of collusion. Living in an age when every branch of human knowledge is reduced

to popular systems; when the vigils of reason are hallowed at the shrine of experiment and observation;–though we behold in the immense variety of things, the utter uselessness of attempting to renovate a shattered constitution, or of improving a sound one to last beyond a certain period; we nevertheless observe that in the inconceivable waste of elementary particles there prevails the strictest economy. Nothing is produced in vain, nothing consumed without a cause. We clearly perceive that all nature is united by indissoluble ties, that every individual thing exists for the sake of another, and that no one can subsist without its concomitant. Hence we conclude, that man himself is not an insulated being, but a necessary link in the great chain, which connects the universe. Nature is our safest guide, and she will be so with greater certainty, as we become bet-

ter acquainted with her operations, especially with respect to those particulars which more nearly concern our physical existence. Thus, n source of many and very extensive advantages will be opened; thus, we shall reach our original destination–namely, that of living long and in the enjoyment of sound health, to which, if purity of morals he added, the best hopes may be entertained of a happy state, in a future world, where its inhabitants never die.

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